LETTERS OF JOHN RUSKIN TO CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

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By John Ruskin

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HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

LETTERS OF JOHN RUSKIN

TO

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

John Ruskin

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BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
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THIRD IMPRESSION

PREFACE

It is with reluctance and question that I have brought myself to publish these letters. I had contemplated leaving them in such condition that, perhaps, some of them might be printed after my death. In my judgment Ruskin himself published, or permitted to be published, far too many of his letters, — some of them, as it seemed to me, such as should never have been printed. In his later years much even of what he wrote for publication could not but cause regret to every reader of sensitive appreciation, as affording evidence of weakened faculty of judgment by its lack of self-control and becoming reticence. I had no disposition to run the risk of adding to the mass of ill-advised publications, which gave a false impression of a man not less remarkable for the essential beauty

of his disposition than for the astonishing force and variety of his genius.

But the editors of the final, complete edition of Ruskin's writings now in course of issue were urgent with me to put them in possession of his letters to me, not only for use in their thorough and, in many respects, admirable biographical introductions to the separate works, but also for complete publication in one of the volumes. I recognized the force of their claim. No other series of his letters extended unbroken over so long a term of years, or was likely to possess so much autobiographical interest, — comparatively little, indeed, as a record of events, but much as a record of moods and mental conditions. As a picture of character the letters as a whole were unique. But I was unwilling to entrust the charge of selecting and editing them to any one; especially to any one who had not known Ruskin in his better days and had not known me at all. Influenced by these considerations I finally resolved upon the present publication.

The method to be adopted in editing these letters was not altogether easy to determine. They might be strung together on a consecutive narrative of Ruskin's life; to this there was the objection that already two excellent biographies existed: one the long and authoritative "Life" by Mr. W. G. Collingwood, the other the brief, sympathetic "Memoir" by Mr. Frederic Harrison.

They might be largely illustrated by passages from his other writings bearing upon the topics touched upon, and by full accounts of matters merely referred to in them, but this would have been to insert a disproportionate amount of editorial matter.

I consequently determined to assume that the reader would have a general knowledge of Ruskin's life and writings, and to treat the letters as having an independent interest of their own, merely supplying a brief note here and there to explain the conditions under which they were written. Inadequate as a record of life, they may be read as an irregu-

lar narrative of a friendship with which neither difference of temperament nor frequent and wide divergence of opinion had power to interfere.

Thus presented, the letters afford a remarkable picture of a personage altogether exceptional. The measuring rod which serves for common men will not answer for him. His nature was in the highest degree complex; it was full of contradictory elements which he never succeeded in reconciling so as to obtain steady equilibrium and tranquillity of soul, or persistent fixity of aim. His will was unstable, for in him reason was subject to sentiment and often to transient emotion.

I am not disposed to attempt depicting in words a nature of which a complete and correct description would be extremely difficult. Ruskin has himself given in "Præterita" an account, unsurpassed in sincerity, frankness, and penetration, and not less so in charm, of his childhood and youth and of the main influences by which his character was

shaped. Begun late in life, portions of this account display with unconscious pathos the partial unsoundness of his mind at the time when he was engaged upon it, which finally prevented him from completing what so far as it goes is one of the most delightful of autobiographies. These letters may be regarded as a sequel to "Præterita." They begin where it leaves off and run on to near the end of life.

In preparing them for the press, and reading them in a mass consecutively, after an interval of many years, they touch me even more deeply than when they came to me one by one. Taken all together they form a tragic record of the perplexities of a great and generous soul, the troubles of a tender heart, the spendthrift use and at last the failure of exceptional powers. Such genius, such high aim, such ardent yet often ill-directed effort, and such great yet broken achievement, such splendors sinking into such glooms, — it is a sorrowful story!

Though this be the main impression made

by these letters, yet they show that while there was little happiness in the last forty years of Ruskin's life, there was much in them of enjoyment. Though the background of his life was dark, many gleams of sunshine passed over its foreground.

The letters, save for omissions, are printed without alterations except in respect to punctuation, in which the usual marks have generally been substituted for Ruskin's favorite dash. The omissions, which are indicated by dots, consist for the most part of passages too personal, too intimate, or of too slight interest for publication. I have not printed all the letters which Ruskin wrote to me. In spite of the poets, in spite of modern usage, in spite of Ruskin's own example, I hold with those who believe that there are sanctities in love and life to be kept in privacy inviolate.

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON.

SHADY HILL,
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS,
September, 1904.

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I

1855–1857

LETTERS OF JOHN RUSKIN

I

1855–1857

In October, 1855, I was on the way to Europe. One of my fellow passengers was Mr. James Jackson Jarves of Boston, then well known as a writer upon art and as the owner of a highly interesting collection of pictures made by him during a residence of several years in Italy. He was acquainted with Mr. Ruskin, and offered me a letter of introduction to him. I declined a letter that should make any personal claim, but gratefully accepted a note asking Mr. Ruskin to allow me at his convenience the privilege of seeing the pictures and drawings by Turner which might be open to inspection on his walls. On my arrival in London I inclosed this note to Mr. Ruskin, and received the following gracious reply: —

Denmark Hill, 31 *October*, 1855.

My dear Sir, — On Friday, Monday, or Tuesday next, I should be most happy to see

you at any hour after one, and before four. I do not know what work I may have to do, and I may not be able to have more than a little chat. But the pictures should be at your command.

Very truly yours,

J. RUSKIN.

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON, Esq.

When, in accordance with this note, I went to Denmark Hill, Ruskin received me with unaffected kindliness, as if eager to give pleasure, took me through dining-room and drawing-room, and upstairs into his workroom, to show me his pictures, talking about them with lively animation; and when I thanked him in taking my leave, he assured me that I should be welcome to repeat my visit. He had not given to me (I doubt if he gave it to any one) any indication of his sense of "the infinite waste of time," noted in his "Præterita," "in saying the same things over and over to the people who came to see our Turners."

He was at this time thirty-six years old. The second volume of "Modern Painters" had been published ten years before; he had mean-

while published the "Seven Lamps of Architecture" and the "Stones of Venice," and he was busy this year in writing the third and fourth volumes of "Modern Painters." His abundant light-brown hair, his blue eyes, and his fresh complexion gave him a young look for his age; he was a little above middle height, his figure was slight, his movements were quick and alert, and his whole air and manner had a definite and attractive individuality. There was nothing in him of the common English reserve and stiffness, and no self-consciousness or sign of consideration of himself as a man of distinction, but rather, on the contrary, a seeming self-forgetfulness and an almost feminine sensitiveness and readiness of sympathy. His features were irregular, but the lack of beauty was made up for by the kindness of his look, and the expressiveness of his full and mobile lips.

I did not expect to see Mr. Ruskin again, but it happened on a beautiful morning in the next July that we met in the cabin of the steamer going down the Lake of Geneva from Vevay to Geneva. Ruskin was there, reading aloud, but in a low tone, to his mother, one of

Marmontel's tales. My mother and two sisters were with me. He glanced at us, but he did not recognize me. In a pause of his reading I ventured to recall myself to his memory. He begged my pardon pleasantly for having failed to recognize me, and then we fell into conversation which lasted till we reached Geneva. When we parted at the quay it was with a promise that I would come in the evening to see him and his parents. Ruskin has recorded this meeting in "Præterita," with a friendly exaggeration thoroughly characteristic of his generous disposition to exalt the merits of his friends, and of his instinctive habit, manifest as well in his personal relations as in his writings, of magnifying the interest, the importance, or the charm of whatever might for the moment engage his attention and regard.[1]

In the evening I carried with me a volume of the poems of Lowell, concerning whom we had spoken, and I left the volume with him. He was going on the next day to Chamouni. In the morning I received the following note from him: —

[1] *Præterita*, iii. ch. 2.

[GENEVA, 18 *July*, 1856.]

I am truly obliged to you for showing me this book. Lowell must be a noble fellow. The "Fable for Critics" in animal spirit and fervor is almost beyond anything I know, and it is very interesting to see, in the rest, the stern seriousness of a man so little soured — so fresh and young at heart.

I hope you have enjoyed yourselves. Can you send me a line to Union Hotel, Chamouni, to say you have?

Pray come to see me if you can before leaving England.

Truly yours,

J. RUSKIN.

Two or three days later we met again, at the little inn [1] at St. Martin. He has told of our early morning walk.[2] The friendship had begun which was to last till the end of life.

[1] This was the Hotel du Mont Blanc, of which Ruskin has written: "to me, certainly, of all my inn homes, the most eventful, pathetic, and sacred." *Præterita*, ii. ch. 21.

[2] *Præterita*, iii. ch. 3.

In the autumn, my mother and sisters having returned to America, I was in London, staying at Fenton's Hotel in St. James's Street, much out of health. I had promised to let Ruskin know of my coming to London, and on hearing of it, he at once came to see me, and while I remained there, few days passed in which he did not send me a note like the following, or come to my parlor, laden with books and drawings for my amusement, or carry me off in his brougham for an hour or two at Denmark Hill.

Saturday Morning [*October*, 1856].

Dear Mr. Norton, — In case I don't find you to-day (and I can't be at home this afternoon), could you dine with us to-morrow at ½ past four — or if not able to do that, come in at any hour you like to tea in the evening?

Yours affectionately,

J. Ruskin.

Of course you will only find my father and mother and me, and perhaps an old family friend.

DENMARK HILL [*October*, 1856].

DEAR NORTON, — Most unwillingly I am forced — I 'll tell you how when we meet — to give up my walk this afternoon, but I 'll come and take tea with you at eight if I may.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. R.

Wednesday, 28th [*October*, 1856].

DEAR NORTON, — I do hope you have faith enough in me to understand how much I am vexed at not being able to come and see you. Of course I could run upstairs and down again at Fenton's sometimes, but what would be the use of that? Could you come out to see me to-morrow, Thursday, about ½ past two? If not, I can come into town on Friday, about two.

Please, if you can't come to-morrow, send me a line to say if you can be at home on Friday.

Yours affectionately,

J. RUSKIN.

FROM JOHN JAMES RUSKIN.

DENMARK HILL [3 *November*, 1856].

DEAR SIR, — Mr. Dallas, formerly editor of the "Edinburgh Guardian" and now attached to a great London paper, may dine here on Saturday (the only day he can dine out). It would give Mrs. Ruskin, myself and son great pleasure to see you at dinner on Saturday next, 8 November, at six o'clock. I think you said you did not leave for a week.

An answer would oblige,

Dear Sir, Yours truly,

JOHN JAMES RUSKIN.

C. E. NORTON, Esq.

Denmark Hill is on the Surrey side of the Thames, in the Camberwell district of London, and in those days had a pleasant suburban character. The house in which Ruskin lived with his father and mother stood not far from the top of the hill, walled from the street, and set back in grounds of its own of some six or seven acres, with space enough for old trees and large gardens, and with a meadow, rather than lawn, behind it,

over which, so open was the region then, lay a pleasant vista toward the east. There was a lodge at the gate, from which a short avenue led to the house. The house itself was of brick, ample, solid, of no architectural pretensions, but not without a modest suburban and somewhat heavy dignity of aspect which gave the assurance of a home of comfort and of tranquil ease. "The house itself," says Mr. Ruskin, "had no specialty, either of comfort or inconvenience, to endear it; the breakfast-room, opening on the lawn and the farther field, was extremely pretty when its walls were mostly covered with lakes by Turner and doves by William Hunt; the dining and drawing-rooms were spacious enough for our grandest receptions . . . and had decoration enough in our Northcote portraits, Turner's Slave-ship and, in later years, his Rialto, with our John Lewis, two Copley Fieldings, and every now and then a new Turner drawing." [1]

Ruskin's father and mother received me at Denmark Hill, as their son's new acquaintance, with unquestioning kindness. Of both

[1] *Præterita*, ii. ch. 8.

of them Ruskin has written much in delightful pages of "Fors" and "Præterita."

His father was now a man of seventy years of age, looking perhaps younger than his years, somewhat reserved in manner, of rugged Scotch features, but of refined and pleasant expression. His mother, some years older, was plainly the ruling influence in their domestic life. She was a personage who seemed rather a contemporary of Miss Austen's characters than of the actual generation. Her air was that of one accustomed to deference from those about her. Her eyes were keen, and her speech decisive. She was one of those English matrons, now become rare, of an individuality independent of changes in fashion and convention, not bending to others, but expecting others to accept her ways and adapt themselves to them. Her image, as I recall it, was that of a vigorous old lady of somewhat commanding aspect, whose dress betokened her feminine taste for soft-colored silks, for abundance of old lace, and for the heavy ornaments of English jewelry. The manners toward her of her husband and son were always deferen-

tial, though her son ventured occasionally to be playful with her with a lively humor which occasionally ruffled her, but which, on the whole, she did not dislike. Her regard for him seemed to be still that of a watchful mother for a child who, though he has escaped her control in matters outside of an immediate personal relation, has not yet reached the years of discretion. There was less intimacy of sympathy between them than between Ruskin and his father. But even with his father, sympathies were limited on both sides, not so much by incompatibilities of taste and judgment, for in many respects these were much alike in both, as by the peculiar manner in which Ruskin had been brought up and been taught to regard his parents, and by the separation wrought by the position in the world which his genius had created for him. The feeling of his parents for him was a compound of pride with affection, and his feeling for them was one in which the sense of duty, reverence, and obedience was perhaps a larger element than affection.

In describing his early years, he says: "I

had nothing to love. My parents were — in a sort — visible powers of nature to me, no more loved than the sun and the moon. . . . I had no companions to quarrel with, neither; nobody to assist, and nobody to thank. . . . I had nothing to endure. . . . Lastly, and chief of evils, my judgment of right and wrong and powers of independent action were left entirely undeveloped; because the bridle and blinkers were never taken off me. . . . The ceaseless authority exercised over my youth left me, when cast out at last into the world, unable for some time to do more than drift with its vortices."[1]

The results of these conditions were all the more disastrous because of the exceptional sensitiveness of his nature, his extreme susceptibility to immediate impressions, the affectionateness and generosity of his disposition, and the peculiar constitution of his genius. No child ever needed more a discipline which should develop his power of self-control, and no child ever was more trained to depend on external authority. This authority he was taught to obey without question, but the lesson of self-restraint was omitted.

[1] *Præterita*, i. ch. 2.

In a letter to Rossetti written not long before this time, he said of himself, "I am exceedingly fond of making people happy," and of this I soon had full experience. He was unwearied in his kindnesses and generosities. But in the same letter he said: "It is a very great, in the long-run the greatest, misfortune of my life that, on the whole, my relations, cousins and so forth, are persons with whom I can have no sympathy, and that circumstances have always somehow or another kept me out of the way of people of whom I could have made friends. So that I have no friendships and no loves."[1] The barrenness of his life in this respect, and the greatness of the misfortune to him, soon became plain to me. Of all men he most needed friends, and in their place he had admirers and dependents. The manner of his education, his genius, and his early acquired celebrity had all contributed to prevent him in his youth from associating on even terms with his fellows, while the circumstances and occupations of his life since leaving Oxford

[1] *Ruskin: Rossetti: Pre-Raphaelitism.* By W. M. Rossetti. London, 1899. Pp. 71, 72.

had tended to limit his intercourse with the world. He had little knowledge of men, little keenness of discernment of character, and little practical acquaintance with affairs. Experience had not taught him the lesson, which it compels the common run of men to learn, of reconciling into a general if imperfect harmony the conflicting traits of his own disposition; and he consequently often was, and still oftener seemed, inconsistent in conduct and in conviction. From his earliest childhood he had been unhappily trained to self-occupation and self-interest, and with a nature of extreme generosity and capable of self-forgetful sacrifice, the gratification of his generous impulses became often a form of self-indulgence.

It was, of course, only gradually and slowly that I came to a knowledge of the peculiar influences by which his life had been shaped and his character formed. When I first knew him, he had a most engaging personality. He was in the very heyday of distinction. But his reputation sat lightly on him; his manners were marked by absence of all pretension, and by a sweet gentleness and ex-

ceptional consideration for the feelings of others. The tone of dogmatism and of arbitrary assertion too often manifest in his writing was entirely absent from his talk. In spite of all that he had gone through of suffering, in spite of the burden of his work, and the weight of his renown, he had often an almost boyish gayety of spirit and liveliness of humor, and always a quick interest in whatever might be the subject of the moment. He never quarreled with a difference of opinion, and was apt to attribute only too much value to a judgment that did not coincide with his own. I have not a memory of these days in which I recall him except as one of the pleasantest, gentlest, and kindest of men. He seemed cheerful rather than happy. The deepest currents of his life ran out of sight, but it was plain that they did not run calmly, and their troubled course became manifest now and then in extravagances of action and paradoxes of opinion.

Ruskin's father, as one saw him at his own house, had not much of the air of a man of business, but rather that of a cultivated Eng-

lish gentleman, with an excellent acquaintance with the masters of English literature and a genuine fondness for them, and with unusual interest and taste in matters pertaining to the arts. He was an agreeable host, unaffected and considerate in manner, and well able to bear his part in good talk. The intimate friend of the house, and the one most often found at the modest dinners to which three or four guests might be invited, was Mr. W. H. Harrison, of whom Ruskin has given a genial sketch in an autobiographical reminiscence called "My First Editor."[1] He had, indeed, good reason for gratitude to this mild, good-humored, secondary man of letters, editor of "Friendship's Offering" and the like, and for many years registrar of the Literary Fund. Mr. Harrison had practical sense and kindly discretion, he was skilled in the technical elements of literature, and he devoted unwearied pains to the revision of his friend's hasty literary work. "Not a book of mine for good thirty years," wrote Ruskin, "but went every word of it under his careful eyes twice over." "The friendship

[1] To be found in the first volume of *On the Old Road.*

between Mr. Harrison, my father, and mother and me attained almost the character of a family relationship, which remained faithful and loving, more and more conducive to every sort of happiness among us, to the day of my father's death."

One evening at dinner, when the cloth was drawn, Mr. Ruskin, senior, in special honor of the occasion, had set before him a decanter of sherry from the cask which had been on board the Victory for Nelson's use in what were to be the last months of his life. Mr. Ruskin was always proud of his sherry, but this wine, of supreme excellence in itself, not only pleased his fine palate, but touched his romantic fancy. It had been ripened on a fateful voyage, it had rocked to the thunder of the guns of Trafalgar, a glass of it might have moistened Nelson's dying lips. The old wine-merchant's appreciation of the associations which it evoked was a pleasant exhibition of his suppressed poetic sensibilities. The talk suggested by the wine ran back to the early years of the century, and the two elder men recalled some of the incidents of the time when they were youths beginning

their way in London, and especially of its literary interests. Both of them had been members of the scanty audience which had gathered in the winter of 1811–12 in a big ugly room, in a court off Fleet Street, to listen to Coleridge's lectures on Shakespeare and Milton. Mr. J. P. Collier's reports of these lectures had just been published, and Mr. Harrison was able to set right from memory Collier's account of Coleridge's classification of readers.[1]

They had been greatly interested in the lectures, and had found in them a gen-

[1] Mr. Harrison was good enough to write down for me the next day what he had told at dinner, and since Collier's is the only known report of this course of lectures, Mr. Harrison's correction of it has perhaps interest enough to justify its preservation. "Coleridge gave four types of readers, one of which I have forgotten: 1st, Those whose minds are like an hour-glass; what they read runs in and runs out like the sand and not a grain is retained. 2d, Those who are like sponges, which suck up everything and give it out again in much the same state, but a little dirtied. 3d," [Forgotten. According to Collier, "Strain bags who retain merely the dregs."] "4th, The readers who are like the slaves in the mines of Golconda, they cast aside the dirt and dross, and preserve only the jewels." Mr. Collier's plainly incorrect report of this fourth class is as follows: "Mogul diamonds, equally rare and valuable, who profit by what they read, and enable others to profit by it also."

eral intellectual stimulus of a high order, as well as specific criticisms which they had learned to value as years went on. Ruskin thought Coleridge had been vastly overrated as a philosopher, and that "his best poems were feverish." Another topic of the after-dinner talk was Emerson's "English Traits," which was then a new book. All praised it. "How did he come to find out so much about us?" said the elder Mr. Ruskin, "especially as regards matters on which we keep quiet and are reserved among ourselves." That was the voice of the generation to which Mr. Ruskin belonged. His son, speaking for himself and for his generation, would hardly have used the like terms. One of the great changes in England during the nineteenth century was the breaking down of many of the old-style walls within which the shy Englishman was wont to entrench himself, and no English writer ever opened himself and his life to the public with more complete and indiscreet unreserve than Ruskin. His father would have been horrified could he in the days of which I am writing have foreseen the revelations of "Fors" and "Præterita." They do,

indeed, form a contrast which is both humorous and pathetic to the close reserves of Denmark Hill, and to the strict Anglican conventions, at their best so pleasant and so worthy of respect, in accordance to which life there was conducted.

The difference in age between Ruskin and myself (I was nine years the younger), no less than other greater differences between us, which might well have prevented our intercourse from becoming anything more than a passing acquaintance, seemed not to present themselves to Ruskin's mind. His kindness had its roots in the essential sweetness of his nature. Everything in life had conspired to spoil him. He was often willful and wayward and extravagant, but the better elements of his being prevailed over those which, to his harm, were to gain power when he was released from the controlling influence of his father's good sense and his mother's authority. The extraordinary keenness of his perceptions of external things, the vivacity of his intelligence, the ardor of his temperament, the immense variety of his interests and occupations, and the restless energy and

industry with which he pursued them, distinguished him from other men. And combined as they were with deep poetic and deeper moral sentiment, as well as with a native desire to give pleasure, they gave to intercourse with him an interest and a charm which increased as acquaintance grew into affectionate friendship. His mind was, indeed, at this time in a state of ferment. He was still mainly busy with those topics of art and nature to which his writings had hitherto been devoted. But his work in that field had led him into other regions of inquiry, which stretched wide and dark before him, through which no clear paths were visible, and into which he was entering not without hope of opening a way. Henceforth his chief mission was that, not of the guide in matters of art, but of the social reformer. And it was at this moment — a moment of perplexity and trouble — when he was becoming conscious of the new direction to be given to his life that our acquaintance began.

When, after a month in which our relations grew constantly more familiar, I left England to spend the winter of 1856–57 in

Rome, I felt myself already under a lifelong debt of gratitude to him.

The day before I went he sent to me the following note.

[*November*, 1856.]

DEAR NORTON, — It will of course be a privilege to me to take charge of the vignette [1] while you are travelling, and of course I should do whatever you bid me faithfully in all matters — but I think a little arrangement of leather case and glass might make the drawing portable for you, and a pleasant companion on your journey. If I see you to-day I will tell you how; if I don't, please let me know quickly if you have already Rogers' Italy, and if you haven't — no, it would be too late, perhaps. I will send one in this evening if I don't find you, and if you haven't got it, keep it, for it's a proof copy — and I 'll write your name in it when I see you

[1] Turner's water-color drawing of Scott's house in Castle Street, Edinboro; "the very thing for you to have," Ruskin had written to me a few days before in advising me to purchase it.

again. If you have it, send it me back, and I 'll find something else that you have n't during the winter.

Affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

Ruskin's first letter to me after my departure was the following: —

[London] 28th *December*, 1856.

Dear Norton, — Railways are good for letters, assuredly; it seems very wonderful, and is very pleasant, to hear from you in Rome only a week ago; for I got your letter yesterday, and should have had it the day before, but that I was staying in town for a few days. And I hope the enjoyment of that damp and discordant city and that desolate and diseaseful Campagna, of which your letter assures me, may be received as a proof of your own improved health, and brightness of heart and imagination.

I think, perhaps, I abuse Rome more because it is as sour grapes to me. When I

was there[1] I was a sickly and very ignorant youth; and I should be very glad, now, if I could revisit what I passed in weariness or contempt; and I do envy you (sitting as I am just now in the Great Western hotel at Paddington, looking out upon a large number of panes of gray glass, some iron spikes, and a brick wall) that walk in sight of Sabine hills. Still, reasoning with myself in the severest way, and checking whatever malice against the things I have injured, or envy of you, there may be in the feelings with which I now think of Rome, these appear to me incontrovertible and accurate conclusions,—that the streets are damp and mouldy where they are not burning; that the modern architecture is fit only to put on a Twelfth cake in sugar (*e. g.* the churches at the Quattro Fontane); that the old architecture consists chiefly of heaps of tufo and bricks; that the Tiber is muddy; that the Fountains are

[1] He was there in bad health in the winter of 1840–41. See *Præterita*, ii. ch. 2, for the account of his stay there.

fantastic; that the Castle of St. Angelo is too round; that the Capitol is too square; that St. Peter's is too big; that all the other churches are too little; that the Jews' quarter is uncomfortable; that the English quarter is unpicturesque; that Michael Angelo's Moses is a monster; that his Last Judgment is a mistake; that Raphael's Transfiguration is a failure; that Apollo Belvidere is a public nuisance; that the bills are high; the malaria strong; the dissipation shameful; the bad company numerous; the Sirocco depressing; the Tramontana chilling; the Levante parching; the Ponente pelting; the ground unsafe; the politics perilous, and the religion pernicious. I do think, that in all candour and reflective charity, I may assert this much.

Still, I can quite understand how, coming from a fresh, pure, and very ugly country like America, there may be a kind of thirst upon you for ruins and shadows which nothing can easily assuage; that after the scraped clean-

liness and business and fussiness of it (America), mildew and mould may be meat and drink to you, and languor the best sort of life, and weeds a bewitchment (I mean the unnatural sort of weed that only grows on old bricks and mortar and out of cracks in mosaic; all the Campagna used to look to me as if its grass were grown over a floor); and the very sense of despair which there is about Rome must be helpful and balmy, after the over-hopefulness and getting-on-ness of America; and the very sense that nobody about you is taking account of anything, but that all is going on into an unspelt, unsummed, undistinguished heap of helplessness, must be a relief to you, coming out of that atmosphere of Calculation. I can't otherwise account for your staying at Rome.

You may wonder at my impertinence in calling America an ugly country. But I have just been seeing a number of landscapes by an American painter of some repute; and the

ugliness of them is Wonderful. I see that they are true studies, and that the ugliness of the country must be Unfathomable. And a young American lady has been drawing under my directions in Wales this summer, and when she came back I was entirely silenced and paralyzed by the sense of a sort of helplessness in her that I could n't get at; an entire want of perception of what an English painter would mean by beauty or interest in a subject; her eyes had been so accustomed to ugliness that she caught it wherever she could find it, and in the midst of beautiful stony cottages and rugged rocks and wild foliage, would take this kind of thing[1] for her main subject; or, if she had to draw a mountain pass, she would select this turn in the road,[1] just where the liberally-minded proprietor had recently mended it and put a new plantation on the hill opposite.

In her, the contrary instinct of deliverance is not yet awake, and I don't know how to

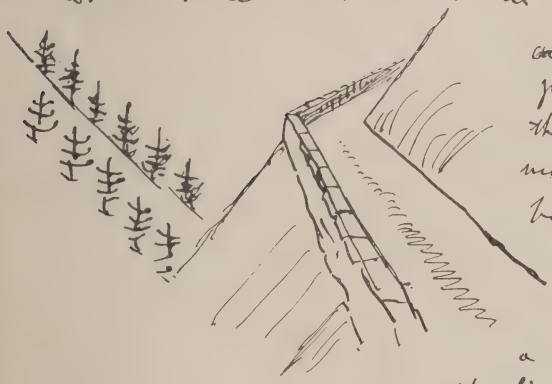
[1] See facsimile.

awake it. In you, it is in its fullest energy, and so you like weeds, and the old, tumbled-to-pieces things at Rome. . . .

I shall be writing again soon, as I shall have to tell you either the positive or negative result of some correspondence which the Trustees of the National Gallery have done me the honour to open with me (of their own accord), which, for the present, has arrived at a turn in the Circumlocution road, much resembling in its promising aspect that delineated above,— but which may nevertheless lead to something, and whether it does or not, I accept with too much pleasure the friendship you give me, not to tell you what is uppermost in my own mind and plans at the moment, even though it should come to nothing (and lest it should, as it is too probable, don't speak of it to any one). Meantime I am writing some notes on the Turner pictures already exhibited, of which I shall carefully keep a copy for you; I think they will amuse you, and I have got a copy of the first

an English painter would mean by beauty or interest in a subject - her eyes had been so accustomed to aglimp that she caught at it wherever she could find it, and in the midst of beautiful stony cottages & rugged rocks & wild foliage - would take this kind of thing for her main subject:

or - if she had to draw a mountain pass. she would select this turn in the road.-



~~and so on~~. just where the liberally minded proprietor had recently mended it and put a new plantation on the hill opposite.

In her, the contrary instinct of deliverance is not yet awake - & I don't know how to awake it. In you, it is in its fullest energy - & so you like weeds - and those cold tumbled-to-pieces things at Rome.

notes on the Academy, which you asked me for, and which I duly looked for, but could n't find, to my much surprise; the copy I have got is second-hand. You have n't, of course, read Mrs. Browning's "Aurora Leigh," or you would have spoken in your letter of nothing else. I only speak of it at the end of my letter, not to allow myself time to tell you anything about it except to get it; and to get it while you are still in Italy.

This will not reach you in time for the New Year, but it will, I hope, before Twelfth day; not too late to wish you all happiness and good leading by kindliest stars, in the year that is opening. My Father and Mother send their sincerest regards to you, and do not cease to congratulate me on having gained such a friend. Believe me,

Affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

You never saw your vignette framed; it looks lovely.

After the winter in Rome I went to Venice, and there received the following letter: —

[Undated, but *May*, 1857.]

DEAR NORTON, — Very good it is of you to write to me again; and to think of me before the snowy mountains, in spite of my unsympathizing answer to your first letter, and my no answer to your second; which, nevertheless, I was grateful for. And so you are going to Venice, and this letter will, I hope, be read by you by the little square sliding pane of the gondola window. For I hope you hold to the true Gondola, with Black Felze, eschewing all French and English substitutions of pleasure-boat and awning. I have no doubt, one day, that the gondolas will be white instead of black, — at the rate they carry on their reforms at Venice.

I went through so much hard, dry, mechanical toil there, that I quite lost, before I left it, the charm of the place. Analysis is an

abominable business; I am quite sure that people who work out subjects thoroughly are disagreeable wretches. One only feels as one should when one does n't know much about the matter. If I could give you, for a few minutes, just as you are floating up the canal, just now, the kind of feeling I had when I had just done my work, when Venice presented itself to me merely as so many "mouldings," and I had few associations with any building but those of more or less pain and puzzle and provocation! Pain of frost-bitten fingers and chilled throat as I examined or drew the window-sills in the wintry air; puzzlement from said window-sills which did n't agree with the doorsteps — or back of house, which would n't agree with front; and provocation, from every sort of soul or thing in Venice at once; from my gondoliers, who were always wanting to go home, and thought it stupid to be tied to a post in the Grand Canal all day long, and disagreeable to have to row to Lido afterwards; from my cook,

who was always trying to catch lobsters on the doorsteps, and never caught any; from my valet de place, who was always taking me to see nothing; and waiting by appointment — at the wrong place; from my English servant, whom I caught smoking genteelly on St. Mark's Place, and expected to bring home to his mother quite an abandoned character; from my tame fish, who splashed the water all over my room, and spoiled my drawings; from my little sea-horses, who would n't coil their tails about sticks when I asked them; from a fisherman outside my window, who used to pound his crabs alive for bait every morning just when I wanted to study morning light on the Madonna della Salute; from the sacristans of all the churches, who used never to be at home when I wanted them; from the bells of all the churches, which used always to ring most when I was at work in the steeples; from the tides, which never were up, or down, at the hour they ought to have been; from the wind, which

used to blow my sketches into the canal, and one day blew my gondolier after them; from the rain, which came through the roof of the Scuola di San Rocco; from the sun, which blistered Tintoret's Bacchus and Ariadne every afternoon, at the Ducal palace,—and from the Ducal palace itself, worst of all, which would n't be found out, nor tell me how it was built (I believe this sentence had a beginning somewhere, which wants an end some other where, but I have n't any end for it, so it must go as it is); but apropos of fish, mind you get a fisherman to bring you two or three *cavalli di mare*, and put them in a basin in your room, and see them swim. But don't keep them more than a day, or they 'll die; put them into the canal again.

There was only one place in Venice which I never lost the feeling of joy in; at least the pleasure which is better than joy; and that was just halfway between the end of the Giudecca and St. George of the Seaweed at sunset. If you tie your boat to one of the

posts there, you can see at once the Euganeans, where the sun goes down, and all the Alps, and Venice behind you by this rosy sunlight; there is no other spot so beautiful. Near the Armenian convent is however very good also; the city is handsomer, but the place is not so simple and lonely.

I have got all the right feeling back, now, however; and hope to write a word or two about Venice yet, when I have got the mouldings well out of my head — and the mud; for the fact is, with reverence be it spoken, that whereas Rogers says, "there is a glorious city in the Sea," a truthful person must say, "there is a glorious city in the Mud." It is startling at first to say so, but it goes well enough with marble — "Oh Queen, of marble and of Mud."

Well, I suppose that you will look at my Venetian index in the "Stones of Venice," which is in St. Mark's library, so that I need not tell you what pictures I should like you to see, — so now I will tell you a little about my-

self here. First, I am not quite sure I shall be at home at the middle of June — but I shall not be on the Continent. You will, of course, see the exhibition of Manchester, and if not at home, I shall be somewhere in the North, and my father and mother will certainly be at home and know where I am, in case we could plan a meeting. And I shall leave your vignette in my father's care. Secondly, you will be glad to hear that the National Gallery people have entrusted me to frame a hundred Turners at their expense in my own way; leaving it wholly in my hands. This has given me much thought, for had I done the thing at my own cost, I could have mended it afterward if it had gone wrong in any way; but now I must, if possible, get it all perfect at first, or the Trustees won't be pleased. It will all be done by the time you come. Thirdly, I have been very well all the winter, and have not overworked in any way, and I am angry with you for not saying how you are. Fourthly, my drawing-school goes on

nicely, and the Marlborough House people are fraternizing with me. Fifthly, I have written a nice little book for beginners in drawing, which I intend to be mightily useful; and so that is all my news about myself, but I hope to tell you more, and hear a great deal more when you come.

My father and mother beg their sincere regards to you. Mine, if you please, to your mother and sisters when you write.

Please write me a line from Venice, if you are not, as I used to be, out so late in St. Mark's Place or on the lagoons, that you can't do anything when you come in. I used to be very fond of night rowings between Venice and Murano — and then the crossing back through the town at midnight — we used to come out always at the Bridge of Sighs, because I lived either at Danieli's or at a house nearly opposite the Church of the Salute.

Well, good-bye, I can't write more to-night, though I want to. Ever, my dear Norton, affectionately yours, J. Ruskin.

Monday Morning.

I was half asleep when I wrote that last page, or I would n't have said anything about night excursions, which are n't good for you. Go to bed. Moonlight 's quite a mistake; it is nothing when you are used to it. The moon is really very like a silver salver, — no, more like a plated one half worn out and coppery at the edges. It is of no use to sit up to see that.

If you know Mr. Brown, please give him my kind love; and say I shall have written to him by the time you get this.

Mind you leave yourself time enough for Verona. People always give too little time to Verona; it is my dearest place in Italy. If you are vindictive, and want to take vengeance on me for despising Rome, write me a letter of abuse of Verona. But be sure to do it before you have seen it; you can't afterwards. You have seen it, I believe, but give it time and quiet walks, now.

The evening school referred to in the preceding letter was that which Ruskin had now for three years conducted at the Workingmen's College in Great Ormond Street. This college was founded by Frederick Denison Maurice, with the aid of such men as Dr. Furnivall, Tom Hughes, and Charles Kingsley, with the intention of offering "to workingmen and others, who could not take advantage of the higher education open to the wealthy, as much of the best academic training as could be given in evening classes, and to combine this teaching with a real *esprit de corps*, based on the fellowship of citizens and the union of social orders." Ruskin enlisted readily in this effort, for already his thoughts were turned to those social questions which were gradually to become the chief objects of his interest during his later years. The classes at the drawing-school, to which he gave instruction on Thursday evenings through a great part of the year, were mainly composed of young men who were earning their living, but were not in the ranks of the very poor. He gained from acquaintance with them a knowledge of actual

social conditions which tested his theories and stood him in good stead in later years. His sympathy, his patience, his concern for their interests quickened into affection the admiration which his varied powers, exerted for the benefit of his pupils, naturally excited in them; and the indirect lessons which they received from him were perhaps of even more importance to them than his direct instruction. His enthusiasm and his devotion to the self-imposed task were contagious, and in the course of the four or five years in which he gave regular instruction at the school, he enlisted, as his associates in teaching, Rossetti, and for a time William Morris and Burne-Jones. The work was one to engage the sympathies of young idealists desirous to elevate and beautify the life of England. Marlborough House, to which Ruskin refers in his letter, was then the headquarters of the government Department of Science and Art, removed not long afterwards to South Kensington.

It was not for students under his direction or that of his assistants at the Workingmen's College that he wrote the "nice little book"

referred to in the letter, "The Elements of Drawing," but for the many who might wish to learn to draw and had no master to instruct them. The chief aim and bent of its system was discipline of the hand and the eye by a patient and delicate method of work, such as to insure a true sight and a correct representation of the object seen. The little book did good service, and though Ruskin became dissatisfied with some portions of it, and intended to supersede it by the "Laws of Fésole," it still remains in many respects an excellent manual for the solitary student of drawing dependent on his own efforts.

The "Mr. Brown" mentioned near the end of this letter was Ruskin's "old and tried friend," Mr. Rawdon Brown. I did not then know this admirable and unique man. More than ten years later I had the good fortune of coming into friendly relations with him. He had lived in Venice since, as a youth, just out of Oxford, in 1833, he went there on a romantic quest.[1] To the fine qualities of a

[1] The story may be found in an article of mine in the *Atlantic Monthly* for June, 1889, entitled "Rawdon Brown and the Gravestone of 'Banished Norfolk.'"

high-bred Englishman and old-fashioned Tory he added a passionate love of Venice, and an acquaintance with her historic life in all its aspects, such as few of her own sons ever possessed. His days were given to the study of her records and to the rescue of precious scraps from Time's wallet. He died in 1884 where he had lived for more than fifty years, and where he desired to die.

I spent the month of July in England, and was again at Denmark Hill, where I was more than ever impressed with Ruskin's submissiveness to his mother, who took manifest pride in "John," but combated his opinions and lectured him publicly, without, however, disturbing his serenity. She had lived in a narrow circle of strong interests, and knew little of the world outside of it. Accustomed as I have said to deference from her husband and her son, she had acquired conviction of her own infallibility, and her opinions were expressed with decision and as if admitting of no question. Ruskin himself was delightful. His heart had not yet become overburdened, nor his mind overstrained. I wrote at the

time: "He is quite unspoiled by praise and by abuse, of both of which he has received enough to ruin a common man. His heart is still fresh. It is pleasant to hear his friends speak of him, — the Brownings, Rossetti, Mrs. Gaskell; they all are warm in speaking of his kindness, generosity, and faithfulness. Few men are so lovable."

The summer of 1857 was that of the great Fine Arts Exhibition at Manchester. Ruskin had undertaken to give two lectures there in the course of the month of July. In order to secure uninterrupted quiet for writing them he proposed to spend a week or two at a farmhouse, near the picturesque little village of Cowley, not far from Oxford, and, as I was to visit friends at Oxford, it was arranged that we should be there at the same time. We were much together. He read to me from his lectures as he wrote them, and the reading led to long discussion. The lectures were the first clear manifesto of the change in the main interests of his life. They were soon published under the title of "The Political Economy of Art," and when reprinted, more than twenty years afterward, Ruskin gave

them the name of "A Joy Forever[1] (and its Price in the Market)." In the preface to this edition of 1880, he wrote, "The exposition of the truths, to which I have given the chief energy of my life, will be found in the following pages first undertaken systematically and then in logical sequence." It will easily be understood how interesting and how fruitful to me were the talks we had while he was writing this introduction to the thought and life of his later years.

Before the end of the summer I returned to America.

[1] These words had been written in gold on the cornice of the great exhibition.

II

1857–1868

II

1857–1868

I HAD been but a few weeks at home, after my return from Europe, when I received from Ruskin a letter, memorable to me as the first of the long series which was to follow, and, still more so, as almost the last light-hearted one that he ever wrote to me. For in the immediately succeeding years his convictions in respect to matters of deepest concern underwent a vital change, which disturbed the currents of his life, turning them into new and troubled channels. Youth came to its close; the props which had supported it and the defenses which had guarded it fell away one after the other, and were leaving him solitary and exposed. His letters indicate these conditions, but do not set them forth in full. His fluctuating moods, the variety of his conflicting interests, his incessant and intense industry, his restless spirit, and the exhausting character of his pursuits are apparent in them. His nervous energy was so abundant that he

scorned prudence and would have nothing of patience. He was fixed in his habit of burning his candle at both ends. Counsel and warning were of no avail; he hearkened to them with every good intention of laying them to heart, but his good intentions were seldom carried into effect.

PENRITH, CUMBERLAND,
24th *September*, '57.

DEAR NORTON, — I was very thankful to know you had arrived safely, and without getting any blue put on your wings by that Atlantic, and I am trying to conceive you as very happy in the neighborhood of those rattlesnakes, bears, etc., though it seems to me much the sort of happiness (compared with ours at home here) that a poor little chimney-sweeper is enjoying below on the doorstep, to whom I have just imparted what consolation there is in sixpence for the untowardness of his fate, his master having declared that if "he didna get a job, he suld stop oot all day." You have plenty "jobs," of course, in your fine new country; but you seem to me,

nevertheless, "stopping out all day." I envy your power of enjoyment, however, and respect it, and, so far, understand it; for truly it must be a grand thing to be in a country that one has good hope of, and which is always improving, instead of, as I am, in the position of the wicked man in one of the old paraphrases my mother used to teach me: —

> Fixed on his house he leans; his house
> And all its props decay, —
> He holds it fast; but, while he holds,
> The tottering frame gives way.

And yet, I should n't say that, neither, for in all I am doing, or trying to do, I assume the infancy of my country, and look forward to a state of things which everybody mocks at, as ridiculous and unpopular, and which holds the same relation to our present condition that the said condition does to aboriginal Britonship. Still, one may look triumphantly to the advance of one's country from its long clothes to its jacket and yet grudge the loss

of the pretty lace on the baby caps. Not, by the way, that baby caps ever should have any lace (vide, *passim*, my political economy). Truly, however, it does look like a sunset in the east, to-day; and my baby may die of croup before it gets its jacket; but I know what kind of omen it is for your American *art*, whatever else may flourish among the rattlesnakes, that the first studies of nature which I get sent me here by way of present are of Dead leaves, — studies of hectic red and "flying gold of the ruined woodlands" by a young lady. I have accepted them gratefully, but send her back word that she had better draw *buds* henceforward.

I am just returning through Manchester to London to set to work on the Turner sketches, which are going finally to be entrusted to me, altogether; and a pretty piece of work I shall have of them; pretty, I hope to make it at last, in the most literal sense.

We have had a wonderfully fine summer, and the harvest of oats in Scotland is quite as

pretty as any vintage, — prettier, I think, for a vintage is a great mess, and I always think it such a pity the grapes should be squeezed. Much more when it comes to dancing among the grapes with bare feet, — and other such arcana of Bacchanalian craft. Besides there is, so far as I know, no instrument employed on vines, either for pruning or cutting, half so graceful or metaphorical as the sickle. I don't know what they used in Palestine for the clusters of the "Vine of the earth," but as far as I remember vintages, it is hand work. I have never seen a maize or rice harvest (have you?), and, for the present, think there is nothing like oats: why I should continue to write it in that pedantic manner I know not; the Scotch word being "aits" and the English "whuts," — the h very mute, and the u full. It has been such fine weather, too, that all our little rivers are dried up. You never told me enough about what Americans feel when first they see one of our "celebrated" rivers; Yarrow, or Tweed, or Teviot, or such

like; consisting, in all probability, of as much water as usually is obtained by a mischievous boy from the parish pump, circling round a small stone with a water wagtail on it.

I have not often been more surprised than I was by hearing of Mrs. Stowe at Durham. She had an introduction to the librarian, of course, and there are very notable manuscripts at Durham as you probably know; and the librarian is very proud of them, and was much annoyed when Mrs. Stowe preferred "going in a boat on the river." This preference would have seemed, even to me, a great manuscript hunter, quite justifiable in a novelist; but it puzzled me to account for Mrs. Stowe's conceding the title of "River" to the water at Durham, or conceiving the idea of its floating a boat, seeing that it must, in relation to an American river, bear much the aspect of a not very large town drain.

I shall write you again when I get some notion of my work for winter; I hope in time for the letter to get over the water by the 16th

November; I have put it down 16th in my diary; and yet in my memory it always seemed to me you said the 17th. I can't make out why. I am very glad that you found all well. Present my sincerest regards to Mrs. Norton and your sisters. My father and mother unite in kind and grateful remembrances to yourself.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

6th *November*, 1857.

Dear Norton, — It is quite inconceivable how time goes, but I hope this note will catch the steamer, and reach you not long after the 16th. I hope you will have believed that I was thinking of you; as I shall be, and that I love you, and long to see you here again, where a birthday is something; in that new country one must feel as if it was birthday all the year round. But I hope you 'll have as many as if you really cared for them.

My true regards to your mother and sister.

I have your books and thank you deeply for them. What do you think of my trust in your friendship when I tell you — that I have n't yet read a word!

Ever yours affectionately,

J. RUSKIN.

DENMARK HILL, 5th *December*, 1857.

DEAR NORTON, — I am now beginning to be seriously anxious lest you should not have got either of my letters — and if not, what you are thinking of me by this time I cannot guess — kindly and merciful as I know your judgment always is. I sent you one letter from Manchester, not a long one, but still a "letter;" then a "salutation" rather than letter, posted as I thought very cleverly, so as to get over the water just in time for your birthday, about ten days afterwards. Just about then — No, it must have been later, perhaps five days after the 16th, I got your letter of the 30th October; but I supposed at all events my birthday letter would have reached you

and explained matters. My letters were directed Cambridge, near Boston. I knew nothing of Rhode Island or Newport,[1] nor do I know more now, but this line must take its chance.

I was delighted with the magazine[2] and all that was in it — but I won't write more just now, for I feel doubtful even of your Rhode Island address and in despair lest I should never catch you with a letter in that fearful American Wilderness, from which you will shoot barbed arrows at me, or poisoned ones of silence.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

I see you are to stay at Rhode Island some months, so I may risk a little bit more chat — not that I can chat at present, for my head and hands are full to choking and perpetual

[1] I was spending the winter in Newport.

[2] The first number of the *Atlantic Monthly*, — that for November.

slipping through thoughts and fingers. I 've got all the Turner sketches in the National Gallery to arrange, — 19,000: of these some 15,000 I had never seen before, and though most of them quite slight and to other people unintelligible, to me they are all intelligible and weary me by the quantity of their telling, hundreds of new questions beyond what they tell being suggested every hour. Besides this I have to plan frames — measure — mount — catalogue — all with single head and double hands only: and under the necessity of pleasing other people no less than of satisfying myself — and I 've enough to do.[1] (I did n't know there was anything graphic on this side of the paper.[2])

I 'm very grateful for your faith in me through all this unhappy accident of silence.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

[1] Ruskin gave a full and interesting account of the condition in which he found these drawings, and of his work on them, in the preface to the fifth volume of *Modern Painters*.

[2] Two fragments of drawing.

What a glorious thing of Lowell's that is[1] — but it 's too bad to quiz Pallas, I can stand it about anybody but her.

[*February* 28, 1858.]

My dear Norton, — Your letter for my birthday and the two little volumes of Lowell reached me as nearly as possible together — the letter on the ninth of February[2] — so truly had you calculated. I know you will have any patience with me, so here is the last day of the month, and no thanks sent yet.

To show you a little what kind of state my mind is in, I have facsimiled for you as nearly as I could one of the 19,000 sketches. It, like most of them, is not *a* sketch, but a group of sketches, made on both sides of the leaf of the notebook. The size of the leaf is indicated by the red line, — on the opposite leaf of the note-paper is the sketch on the other side of the leaf in the original. The note-books vary

[1] "The Origin of Didactic Poetry," in the *Atlantic Monthly*.
[2] Ruskin's birthday was February 8.

in contents from 60 to 90 leaves; there are about two hundred books of the kind (300 and odd, of notebooks in all), and each leaf has on an average this quantity of work, a great many leaves being slighter, some blank, but a great many also elaborate in the highest degree, some containing ten exquisite compositions on each side of the leaf — thus — each no bigger than this [1] — and with about that quantity of work in each — but every touch of it inestimable, done with his whole soul in it. Generally the slighter sketches are written over everywhere, as in the example enclosed, every incident being noted that was going on at the moment of the sketch. The legends on one side, you will see, "Old wall, Mill, Wall, Road, Linen drying." Another subject, scrawled through the big one afterwards, inscribed, "Lauenstein [?]." The words under "Children playing at a well" I can't read. The little thing in the sky of

[1] Ruskin here drew an oblong figure about two inches by one. See facsimile.

of work. a great many leaves being lighter — some blanks but a great many also elaborate in the highest degree — some containing ten exquisite compositions on each side of the leaf — these. each no bigger than this

and with about that quantity of work in each — but every touch of it inestimable, done with the whole soul in it. Generally the sketches sketches are written over everywhere. as in the example enclosed, every incident being noted that was going on at the moment of the sketch

the one below is the machicolation of the tower.

Fancy all this coming upon me in an avalanche — all in the most fearful disorder — and you will understand that I really can hardly understand anything else, or think about anything else.

Thank you, however, at least for all that I can't think about. Certainly I can't write anything just now for the magazine. Thank you for your notice of my mistake about *freno* in Dante — I have no doubt of your being quite right. . . .

I 've been reading Froissart lately, and certainly, if we ever advance as much from our own times as we have advanced from those of Edward III, we shall have a very pretty free country of it. Chivalry, in Froissart, really seems to consist chiefly in burning of towns and murdering women and children.

Well — no more at present — from — as our English clowns say at the ends of their letters. I assure you this is a longer letter

than I 've written to anybody this four months. Sincerest regards to your mother and sisters.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN.

FROM JOHN JAMES RUSKIN.

LONDON, 31 *May*, 1858.

MY DEAR SIR, — Being authorized to open Letters addressed to my Son Mr. J. Ruskin during his absence (a privilege not always accorded to Fathers), I have had the pleasure of perusing your Letter of 17 May, and a part of it requiring immediate reply will account for my intruding my Correspondence upon you.

I beg of you to detain the Drawing of the Block of Gneiss, being quite certain my son would so wish. He will tell you himself when he wants it — your Letter will go to him to-morrow, at Lucerne.

He has spent seven months, nearly, in reducing to something of Order a Chaos of 19,000 Drawings and Sketches by Turner, now National property — getting mounted or

framed a few hundred of such Drawings as he considered might be useful or interesting to young Artists or the public. These are at Marlborough House, and he is gone to make his own Sketches of any Buildings about the Rhine or Switzerland or north of Italy in danger of falling or of being restored. His seven-month work, though a work of Love, was still work, and though sorry to have him away I was glad to get him away to fields and pastures new. It may be the end of October before he returns D. V. to London. I conclude you have seen his Notes on Exhibitions, or I would send one. The public seem to take more interest in the Pictures as Artists take more pains. It is long since I have bought a Picture (my Son going sufficiently deep into the Luxury), but I was tempted by 3 Small ones at the first glance, — Plassan's Music Lesson, *French Exhn.;* Lewis's Inmate of the Harem, *Rl. Academy*, Lewis's Lilies & Roses, Constantinople, *Rl. Ac'y.* I did not tell my Son I had bought the

first till his Notes were printed — not that it could bias him, but it might have cramped his Critique. When his Notes were out I told him the picture was his, and I was glad he had spoken, say written, so well of it.[1] As the "Times" calls the Inmate of the Harem a Masterpiece of Masterpieces, and the "Spectator" stiles it a marvelous Gem, it is a pretty safe purchase. I had it at home before the public saw it.

I forward to my Son your Photograph of the Giorgione, and I cut out and send Stillman's Lecture, as the present Post Master of France, Nap'n 3rd, is not to be trusted with a newspaper. You are fortunate in possessing a picture of Gainsborough — neither spot nor blot of him ever appear for sale here.

If I have used a freedom in my mode of addressing you at the commencement of this

[1] Ruskin had written of this picture in his *Notes on the Exhibitions*, as follows: "Exquisite in touch of pencil, and in appreciation of delicate character, both in features and gesture. . . . On the whole it seems to me the best piece of quiet painting in the room" [of the French exhibition in London].

Letter, you have yourself occasioned it. In the too few visits you made to us here you almost endeared yourself to Mrs. Ruskin and me as you had already done to my Son. We beg to offer our united Regards and best wishes for your Health.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

JOHN JAMES RUSKIN.

CHAS. E. NORTON, Esqr.

Will you present our Kind Remembrances to your Mother and Sisters. I send a copy of "Notes" to make sure.

DENMARK HILL, 24th *October*, '58.

DEAR NORTON, — At last I begin to write letters again. I have been tired, ill, almost, and much out of heart during the summer; not fit to write to you, perhaps chiefly owing to the reaction from the intense excitement of the Turner work; partly because at 39 one begins to feel a life of sensation rather too much for one. I believe I want either to

take up mathematics for a couple of years, or to go into my father's counting house and sell sherry for the same time — for otherwise, there seems to me a chance of my getting into perfect Dryasdust. I actually found the top of St. Gothard "dull" this year. Besides this feeling of weariness, I have more tiresome interruption than I can bear; questions — begging for opinions on pictures, etc. — all which I *must* put a stop to, but don't yet see my way clearly to the desired result: — the upshot of the matter being that I am getting every day more cold and sulky — and dislike writing letters even to my best friends; I merely send this because I want to know how you are.

I went away to Switzerland this year the moment Academy was over; and examined with a view to history Habsburg, Zug, Morgarten, Grutli, Altorf, Bürglen, and Bellinzona — sketching a little; but generally disgusted by finding all traditions about buildings and places untraceable to any good

foundation; the field of Morgarten excepted, which is clear enough. Tell's birthplace, Bürglen, is very beautiful. But somehow, I tired of the hills for the first time in my life, and went away — where do you think? — to *Turin*, where I studied Paul Veronese in the morning and went to the opera at night for six weeks! And I 've found out a good deal — more than I can put in a letter — in that six weeks, the main thing in the way of discovery being that, positively, to be a first-rate painter — you *must n't* be pious; but rather a little wicked, and entirely a man of the world. I had been inclining to this opinion for some years; but I clinched it at Turin.

Then from Turin I came nearly straight home, walking over the Cenis, and paying a forenoon visit to my friends at Chamouni, walking over the Forclaz to them from St. Gervais and back by the road — and I think I enjoyed that day as if it had been a concentrated month: but yet — the mountains are not what they were to me. A curious

mathematical question keeps whispering itself to me every now and then, Why is ground at an angle of 40, anything better than ground at an angle of 30 — or of 20 — or of 10 — or of nothing at all? It is but ground, after all.

Apropos of St. Gervais and St. Martin's — you may keep that block of gneiss altogether if you like it; I wish the trees had been either in the sky, or out of it.[1]

Please a line to say how you are. Kindest regards to your Mother and Sisters. My Father and mother are well and beg kindest regards to you.

I have written your initials and mine in the two volumes of Lowell (how delightful the new prefaces to the "Fable"!). He does me more good in my dull fits than anybody, and makes me hopeful again. What a beautiful face he has!

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

[1] Some trees originally painted against the sky had been practically washed out, leaving only traces.

Ruskin's discovery at Turin, referred to in the preceding letter, was an experience of deeper nature than his words indicated, and formed the first stage of a decisive change in his convictions alike in respect to art and to religion. Almost thirty years afterwards he wrote of it: —

There, [at Turin] one Sunday morning, I made my way in the south suburb to a little chapel which, by a dusty roadside, gathered to its unobserved door the few sheep of the old Waldensian faith who had wandered from their own pastures under Monte Viso into the worldly capital of Piedmont.

The assembled congregation numbered in all some three or four and twenty, of whom fifteen or sixteen were grey-haired women.

Their solitary and clerkless preacher, a somewhat stunted figure in a plain black coat, with a cracked voice, after leading them through the languid forms of prayer which are all that in truth are possible to people whose present life is dull and its terrestrial future unchangeable, put his utmost zeal into

a consolatory discourse on the wickedness of the wide world, more especially of the plain of Piedmont and the city of Turin, and on the exclusive favour with God enjoyed by the between nineteen and twenty-four elect members of his congregation, in the streets of Admah and Zeboim.

Myself neither cheered nor greatly alarmed by this doctrine, I walked back into the condemned city, and up into the gallery where Paul Veronese's Solomon and the Queen of Sheba glowed in full afternoon light. The gallery windows being open, there came in with the warm air, floating swells and falls of military music, from the courtyard before the palace, which seemed to me more devotional than anything I remembered of evangelical hymns. And as the perfect color and sound gradually asserted their power on me, they seemed finally to fasten me in the old article of Jewish faith, that things done delightfully and rightly were always done by the help and in the spirit of God.

Of course that hour's meditation in the gallery of Turin only concluded the courses of thought which had been leading me to such end through many years. There was no sudden conversion possible to me, either by preacher, picture, or dulcimer. But that day, my evangelical beliefs were put away, to be debated no more.[1]

The recognition of the error in the religious faith in which he had been nurtured, and which had been the basis of his mental life up to his fortieth year was, however, for the time being, both painful and disturbing. He was too honest with himself not to recognize gradually that an important part of his teaching in the earlier volumes of "Modern Painters," in the "Seven Lamps of Architecture," and in the "Stones of Venice," was in the light of his new convictions not only

[1] *Præterita*, iii. 1. Ruskin has given a somewhat different account of this critical incident in *Fors Clavigera*, letter lxxv, March, 1877. A comparison of the two accounts is of interest in its exhibition of their accord as to essentials, with considerable disagreement in detail. It affords a good illustration of the play of the memory.

mistaken but harmful; that many assertions in those books had been as erroneous as they were positive; that his whole theory of the relation of art and religion must be reconstructed, and that his teaching henceforth must often be at variance with his past doctrine. It was a hard, an unsettling revelation, and from the effects of it I believe that he never wholly recovered.

[Denmark Hill] 29th *November* [1858].

Dear Norton, — I 'm so intensely obliged to you for your letter and consolations about Paolo Veronese and Titian, and Turner and Correggio and Tintoretto. Paolo and Titian are much deeper, however, than you know yet, immensely deeper than I had the least idea of till last summer. Paolo 's as full of mischief as an egg 's full of meat — always up to some dodge or other — just like Tintoretto. In his Solomon receiving Queen of Sheba, one of the golden lions of the Throne is put into full light, and a falconer underneath holds a white falcon, as white as snow,

just under the lion, so as to carry Solomon on the lion and eagle, — and one of the elders has got a jewel in his hand with which he is pointing to Solomon, of the form of a Cross; the Queen 's fainting, but her Dog is n't, — a little King Charles Spaniel, about seven inches high, — thinks it shocking his mistress should faint, stands in front of her on all his four legs apart, snarling at Solomon with all his might; Solomon all but drops his sceptre, stooping forward eagerly to get the Queen helped up — such a beautiful fellow, all crisped golden short hair over his head and the fine Arabian arched brow — and I believe after all you 'll find the subtlest and grandest *expression* going is hidden under the gold and purple of those vagabonds of Venetians.[1]

[1] Writing of this picture in the preface to the fifth volume of *Modern Painters* (1860) Ruskin says: "With much consternation but more delight I found that I had never got to the roots of the moral power of the Venetians, and that they needed still another and a very stern course of study." In the third chapter of part ix. in the same volume is a vivid description of the picture.

Yes, I should have been the better of you — a good deal. I can get on splendidly by myself if I can work or walk all day long — but I could n't work, and got low because I could n't.

I can't write more to-day — but I thought you 'd like this better than nothing.

I 'm better now, a little, but doubtful and puzzled about many things. Lowell does me more good than anybody, what between encouraging me and making me laugh. Mr. Knott[1] makes me laugh more than anything I know in the world — the punning is so rapid and rich, there 's nothing near it but Hood, and Hood is so awful under his fun that one never can laugh.

Questi poveri — what are we to do with them? You don't mean to ask me that seriously? Make pets of them, to be sure — they were sent to be our dolls, like the little girls' wax ones — only we can't pet them

[1] Lowell's rollicking poem, "The Unhappy Lot of Mr. Knott."

until we get good floggings for some people, as well.

Always yours affectionately,

J. RUSKIN.

Good of you to send me that birthday letter. I 'm so glad you are better.

DENMARK HILL, 28th *December*, 1858.

DEAR NORTON, — I am sadly afraid you have not got my answer to your kind letter written on your birthday. The answer was short, but instant; and you must rightly have thought me unfeeling when you received none — it is doubly kind of you to send me this poem of Lowell's and your good wishes.

Indeed, I rather want good wishes just now, for I am tormented by what I cannot get said, nor done. I want to get all the Titians, Tintorets, Paul Veroneses, Turners, and Sir Joshuas in the world into one great fireproof Gothic gallery of marble and serpentine. I want to get them all perfectly engraved. I want to go and draw all the subjects of

Turner's 19,000 sketches in Switzerland and Italy, elaborated by myself. I want to get everybody a dinner who has n't got one. I want to macadamize some new roads to Heaven with broken fools'-heads. I want to hang up some knaves out of the way, not that I 've any dislike to them, but I think it would be wholesome for them, and for other people, and that they would make good crow's meat. I want to play all day long and arrange my cabinet of minerals with new white wool. I want somebody to amuse me when I 'm tired. I want Turner's pictures not to fade. I want to be able to draw clouds, and to understand how they go, and I can't make them stand still, nor understand them — they all go sideways, πλάγιαι (what a fellow that Aristophanes was! and yet to be always in the wrong in the main, except in his love for Æschylus and the country. Did ever a worthy man do so much mischief on the face of the Earth?) Farther, I want to make the Italians industrious, the Americans quiet, the Swiss roman-

tic, the Roman Catholics rational, and the English Parliament honest — and I can't do anything and don't understand what I was born for. I get melancholy — overeat myself, oversleep myself — get pains in the back — don't know what to do in any wise. What with that infernal invention of steam, and gunpowder, I think the fools may be a puff or barrel or two too many for us. Nevertheless, the gunpowder has been doing some work in China and India.

Meantime, thank you for Lowell. It[1] is very beautiful, but not, I think, up to his work. Don't let him turn out any but perfect work (except in fun). I don't quite understand

[1] His poem of "Godminster Chimes." The verses Ruskin refers to are: —

Whilst thus I dream, the bells clash out
Upon the Sabbath air;
Each seems a hostile faith to shout,
A selfish form of prayer.

And these: —

One Mary bathes the blessed feet
With ointment from her eyes,
With spikenard one, and both are sweet,
For both are sacrifice.

this. Where is "Godminster"? How many hostile forms of prayer are in the bells of the place that woke him? or where was it? "Ointment from her eyes" is fine, read in the temper it was written in; but the first touch of it on the ear is disagreeable — too much of "eyesalve" in the notion.

I 've ordered all I 've been writing lately to be sent to you in a parcel.

Thank you always for what you send me.

Our sincerest regards to you all.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN.

P. S. I want also to give lectures in all the manufacturing towns, and to write an essay on poetry, and to teach some masters of schools to draw; and I want to be perfectly quiet and undisturbed and not to think, and to draw, myself, all day long, till I can draw better; and I want to make a dear High Church friend of mine sit under Mr. Spurgeon.

When Ruskin returned home in the autumn his father was not satisfied with the studies which he brought from Turin, "and piteously asks," so Ruskin wrote many years afterwards, "for the end of 'Modern Painters,' saying, 'he will be dead before it is done.' Much ashamed of myself I promise him to do my best on it without farther subterfuge." And so, with "hard writing and drawing," in the winter of 1859 the fourth volume got done. Then in the succeeding summer, for the sake of rest and change, Ruskin went abroad with his father and mother, for what was to be the last and the least happy of their many happy journeys together on the Continent.

SCHAFFHAUSEN, 31st *July*, '59.

MY DEAR NORTON, — I have been too unwell or sick at heart lately to write to my friends — but I don't think there 's another of them who has been so good as you, and believed still in my affection for them. As I grow older, the evil about us takes more definite and overwhelming form in my eyes, and I have no one near me to help me or

soothe me, so that I am obliged often to give up thinking and take to walking and drawing in a desperate way, as mechanical opiates, but I can't write letters. My hand is very shaky to-day (as I was up at three to watch the dawn on the spray of the fall, and it is hot now and I am tired), — but I *must* write you a word or two. The dastardly conduct of England in this Italian war has affected me quite unspeakably — even to entire despair — so that I do not care to write any more or do anything more that does not bear directly on poor people's bellies — to fill starved people's bellies is the only thing a man can do in this generation, I begin to perceive.

It has not been my fault that the Rossetti portrait was not done. I told him, whenever he was ready, I would come. But when I go home now, I will see to it myself and have it done. I broke my promise to you about sending books — there was always one lost or to be got or something — and it was put off and off. Well, I hope if they 'd been anybody

else's books, or if I really had thought that my books would do you any good, I 'd *not* have put it off. But you feel all I want people to feel, and know as much as anybody need know about art, and you don't want my books. Nevertheless, when the last volume of M. P. comes out, I 'll have 'em all bound and sent to you. I am at work upon it, in a careless, listless way — but it won't be the worse for the different tempers it will be written in. There will be little or no bombast in it, I hope, and some deeper truths than I knew — even a year ago.

The Italian campaign, with its broken faith, has, as I said, put the top to all my ill humor, but the bottom of it depends on my own business. I see so clearly the entire impossibility of any salvation for art among the modern European public. Nearly every old building in Europe, France and Germany is now destroyed by restoration, and the pictures are fast following. The Correggios of Dresden are mere wrecks; the modern Germans

(chiefly at Munich) are in, without exception, the most vile development of human arrogance and ignorance I have ever seen or read of. I have no words to speak about them in. The English are making progress, which in about fifty years might possibly lead to something, but as yet they know nothing and can know nothing, and long before they gain any sense Europe is likely to be as bare of art as America. You have hope in beginning again. I don't see my way to it clearly.

I want to be as sure as I can of a letter reaching you just now. I shall send this with my London packet to-day, and the next sheet with the next packet next week, so as to have two chances. My health is well enough. I draw a great deal, thinking I may do more good by copying and engraving things that are passing away.

Sincere regards to your Mother and Sisters. Ever, dear Norton,

Affectionately and gratefully yours,

J. Ruskin.

THUN, 15th *August* [1859].

DEAR NORTON, — Scrap No. 2 is long in coming — if it had n't been for the steamers here, which keep putting me in mind, morning and evening, of the steamer on lake of Geneva,[1] I don't know when it would have come. It 's very odd I don't keep writing to you continually, for you are almost the only friend I have left. I mean the only friend who understands or feels with me. I 've a good many radical half friends, but I 'm not a radical and they quarrel with me — by the way, so do you a little — about my governing schemes. Then all my Tory friends think me worse than Robespierre. Rossetti and the P R B[2] are all gone crazy about the Morte d'Arthur. I don't believe in Evangelicalism — and my

[1] On which we had met in July, 1856.

[2] The Pre-Raphaelite Brethren. Morris, Burne-Jones, and others had been painting scenes from the Morte d'Arthur on the walls of the Oxford Union, and Morris had been writing tales imbued with its spirit in the short-lived *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*. The single volume of this magazine contains much writing by Morris and Burne-Jones full of the poetic imagination of their fervent youth.

Evangelical (once) friends now look upon me with as much horror as on one of the possessed Gennesaret pigs. Nor do I believe in the Pope — and some Roman Catholic friends, who had great hopes of me, think I ought to be burned. Domestically, I am supposed worse than Blue Beard; artistically, I am considered a mere packet of quibs and crackers. I rather count upon Lowell as a friend, though I 've never seen him. He and the Brownings and you. Four — well — it 's a good deal to have — of *such*, and I won't grumble — but then you 're in America, and no good to me — except that I 'm in a perfect state of gnawing remorse about not writing to you; and the Brownings are in Italy, and I 'm as alone as a stone on a high glacier, dropped the wrong way, instead of among the moraine. Some day, when I 've quite made up my mind what to fight for, or whom to fight, I shall do well enough, if I live, but I have n't made up my mind what to fight for — whether, for instance, people ought to live

in Swiss cottages and sit on three-legged or one-legged stools; whether people ought to dress well or ill; whether ladies ought to tie their hair in beautiful knots; whether Commerce or Business of any kind be an invention of the Devil or not; whether Art is a Crime or only an Absurdity; whether Clergymen ought to be multiplied, or exterminated by arsenic, like rats; whether in general we are getting on, and if so where we are going to; whether it is worth while to ascertain any of these things; whether one's tongue was ever made to talk with or only to taste with. (Send to Mr. Knott's house and get me some raps if you can.)

Meantime, I 'm copying Titian as well as I can, that being the only work I see my way to at all clearly, and if I can ever succeed in painting a bit of flesh, or a coil of hair, I 'll begin thinking " what next."

I 'll send you another scrap soon. I 'm a little happier to-day than I 've been for some time at the steady look and set of Tuscany and

Modena. It looks like grey of dawn, don't it? Sincerest regards to your Mother and Sisters.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN.

TO JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

DENMARK HILL, 5th *December*, 1859.

DEAR MR. LOWELL, — It was indeed a happy morning for me this, bringing me your letter[1] — besides a delightful one from Norton. For many causes lately I have been needing some help, and this from you is the greatest I could have, and best, though there are few days pass without my getting some help from you and finding something strange and beautiful, bearing on the questions which are teasing us here in the old world; with none of the rest of age, only its querulousness and sleeplessness. I am myself in a querulous and restless state enough, — what head I have nearly turned, or turned at least in the sense in which the cook predicates it of our cream when she

[1] To ask Ruskin to write for the *Atlantic Monthly*.

can't get any butter. I can get no butter at present (could n't even get any bread at two guineas a page) being on the whole vacantly puzzled and paralyzed, able only to write a little now and then of old thoughts, to finish "Modern Painters," which *must* be finished. Whenever I can write at all this winter I must take up that, for it is tormenting me, always about my neck. If no accident hinders it will be done this spring, and then I will see if there is anything I can say clearly enough to be useful in my present state of mystification. I told Norton in my last letter a few of the things I am trying to find out, and I 've found out none yet. I like other people's writings so much better than my own — Tennyson's, Carlyle's, yours, Helps's, and one or two others'es — that I feel much driven to silence and quiet, trying to paint rather than write more. In the meantime "Modern Painters" is giving me more trouble than I can well stand and I *can't* do anything else till it is out of the way.

You gave very great delight to a good many good little hearts the other day. One of my best and wisest friends is the mistress of a large girls' school in Cheshire, a pretty old English hall in large park sloping down to river side; it is one of my chief pleasures sometimes to go and stay there a few days. Last spring I promised the children to bring *you* to them in the autumn; they did not know you before. You know Norton sent me the two volume edition, so I had you all, nearly. We had Columbus and Cromwell and nearly all the prettiest minor poems on successive evenings; the last evening I got a nice blue-eyed girl to be Minerva, and recited the "When wise Minerva yet was young." You should have heard the silver laughing. (N. B. — I had studied curtseying all the afternoon before in order to get myself nicely up as Venus.)

I 've just seen the new edition of the "Biglows," with Hughes' preface. He is a noble fellow and deserves the privilege of editing

them, but one passage in his preface I regret about the sarcasm of the Bible. He might better have proved his point in other ways, or, rather, had better not have tried to prove it, for either people feel strongly enough to understand the "Biglows," or they don't. If they don't, no precedent or principle will make them comprehend the temper of them. But I like the rest of preface, and the edition looks well, and will do much good.

I have been interrupted during the day; but would not sleep without thanking you for your letter. How good and kind you Americans are, when you *are*. I 've only one English friend, after forty years of drawing English breath, whom I would class with Norton and you. Believe me always,

Gratefully and affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

Denmark Hill, 10th *December*, 1859.

My dear Norton, — The first thing I did when I got home was to go to Rossetti to see

about the portrait. I found him deep in work — but, which was worse, I found your commission was not for a little drawing like Browning's, but for a grand, finished, delicate oil — which R. spoke quite coolly of taking three or four weeks about, wanting I don't know how many sittings. I had to go into the country for a fortnight, and have been ill since I came back with cold and such like, and I don't like the looks of myself — however, I 'm going to see R. about it again immediately;[1] but I 'm now worried about another matter. The drawing he has done for you is, I think, almost the worst thing he has ever done, and will not only bitterly disappoint you, but put an end to all chance of R.'s reputation ever beginning in America. Under which circumstances, the only thing to be done, it seems to me, is to send you the said drawing indeed, but with it I will send one he did for me, which at all events has some of his power in it. I am not sure what it will be, for I don't

[1] The commission was never executed.

quite like some bits in the largest I have, and in the best I have the color is changing — he having by an unlucky accident used red lead for vermilion. So I shall try and change the largest with him for a more perfect small one, and send whatever it is for a New Year's token. I shall put a little pencil sketch of R.'s in with it — the Virgin Mary in the house of St. John — not much — yet a Thing such as none but R. could do.

I have your kind letter with Lowell's — both quite aboundingly helpful to me. Please take charge of enclosed answer to Lowell.

I am finishing 5th vol.,[1] and find it is only to be done *at all* by working at it to the exclusion of *everything* else. But — that way — I heartily trust in getting it done in spring and having my hands and soul so far free.

I had heard nothing of that terrible slave affair,[2] till your letter came. I can understand the effect it may have — but here in Europe

[1] Of *Modern Painters.* [2] John Brown's raid.

many and many a martyrdom must come before we shall overthrow our slavery.

I hope to write you another line with drawings — meantime love and all good wishes for your Christmas time, and with sincerest regards to your Mother and Sisters,

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN.

The year 1860, in which the fifth and last volume of "Modern Painters" was published, was the exact middle year of Ruskin's life. The great work of his youth which had been his main occupation for nearly twenty years was completed, but its completion brought no sense of relief at the ending of a long task, and was not succeeded by a period of repose. He had begun in the autumn of 1858, as his letters show, to question the correctness of convictions concerning the fine arts which he had hitherto held firmly and maintained with ardor; the religious teachings which he had received, and on which his faith had rested as on absolute truth, were proving false in the light of widening experience and deeper

thought; his sense of the evil in the world was growing daily more intense and bitter, and, in view of the selfishness and wastefulness of the rich and the misery of the poor, he was rejecting with scorn the popular and accepted theories of social duties and political economy.

Mr. Frederic Harrison, in his excellent and sympathetic "Life of Ruskin," in the English Men of Letters Series, cites with great felicity, as appropriate to this moment of Ruskin's life, the opening words of the "Divine Comedy," "Midway upon the journey of our life I found myself in a dark wood where the straight way was lost." But, unlike Dante, Ruskin found no Virgil to lead him from the wood; henceforth he was to wander through it alone with unremitting endeavor to recover the true path and to show it to those who, like himself, were astray in the forest of this world.

Other trials also were making life hard for him. In 1858, he had had for a pet and pupil in drawing a girl ten years old, Rose La Touche, who became, as time went on, the mistress of his heart, and ruled it till her death in 1875. Her scrupulous conscience,

quickened by various sad influences into morbid susceptibility, wrought unhappiness for them both. She loved him, but refused to be his wife, because, holding a strict evangelical creed, she could not make up her mind to marry a skeptic. Thus, through many years, beginning from this period, there were alternate hopes and despairs, and a continual restlessness and trouble of spirit.

A trial of another sort was due to the gradual divergence from his father and mother, which resulted from the change in his opinions, and from his writings on the questions which were now chiefly engaging his attention. He spent a great part of 1860–61 abroad, without the companionship of his parents. His father, who had fully sympathized with his work on the fine arts, and had taken great pride in it, was at first vexed at his son's excursions into a field with which he felt himself to be the better acquainted. He disliked the heretical doctrines, and he was deeply grieved that his son should expose himself by the manner, as well as the substance, of his new essays to extremely hostile and bitter criticism which was plainly in part well founded.

"In the summer of 1860," wrote Ruskin eleven years later, "perceiving fully what distress was about to come on the populace of Europe through the errors of their teachers, I began to do the best I might to combat them, in the series of papers for the 'Cornhill Magazine,' since published under the title of 'Unto this Last.'" The outcry against them was such that the series was brought to an end with the fourth number, in November. It was an outcry of similar character to that with which the heresies of the first volume of "Modern Painters" had been greeted, and like that it has died away in the course of the years, while some, at least, of the heresies of 1860 have become the orthodox doctrine of 1900.

[DENMARK HILL, *May* 15, 1860.]

DEAR NORTON,—My hand is so tired that I cannot write straight but on this ugly paper. . . . I have had much trouble in concluding my own work, owing to various perceptions of sorrowful things connected with the arts; and occurrences of all kinds of insuperable questions, as you will see in due time. I have

still to put in a sentence or two in the last two chapters; else I had hoped to be able to tell you to-day it was done. But it is so to all intents and purposes, and I hope (the last sheet revised) to leave for Switzerland on the 22nd inst.

I pressed Rossetti hard about the portrait, till I got so pale and haggard-looking over my book that I was ashamed to be drawn so. I think your chief object in getting it done would not have been answered. I hope to get into a natural state of colour (red-nosed somewhat, by the way) among the Alps, and to send you the portrait for a New Year's gift, and to behave better in all ways than I've done.

I will tell you by letter from abroad all about myself and my life which can interest you, or be useful to any one.

I am so *very* glad that you like the Rossetti.[1] It was really a nice chance his having

[1] Ruskin had sent to me Rossetti's characteristic water-color picture of the Meeting of Dante and Beatrice at a Wedding-

done that subject. It came so pat for your *Vita*. . . .

Ever gratefully and affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

[P.S.] I'm going to have the portrait done: to-morrow R. begins.

Neuchâtel, 12th *July*, '60.

Dear Norton, — I fear you have not received my last letter, sent, I think, just before I left England to tell you how happy I was that you liked the Rossetti, and also to warn you against liking it too much, either for my sake or his, it being by no means above his average work (rather, below it), but still the best I could send. Now, I have yours and Lowell's, which I need not say give me more pleasure than any letters I have received or could receive on this subject. They are the more comforting to me because the changes in feeling which you both accept as wise, or conclusive, in me,

festival. The *Vita* refers to my translation of the *Vita Nuova*.

are, to me, very painful pieces of new light, and the sunshine burns my head so that I long for the old shades with their dew again. That depreciation of the purist and elevation of the material school is connected with much loss of happiness to me, and (as it seems to me) of innocence; nor less of hope. I don't say that this connection is essential, but at present it very distinctly exists. It may be much *nobler* to hope for the advance of the human race only, than for one's own and their immortality; much less selfish to look upon one's self merely as a leaf on a tree than as an independent spirit, but it is much less pleasant. I don't say I have come to this — but all my work bears in that direction.

I have had great pleasure, and great advantage also, in Stillman's [1] society this last two

[1] The late W. J. Stillman, who, in chapter xvii of his extraordinarily interesting *Autobiography of a Journalist* (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1901), gives an account of this summer with Ruskin in Switzerland. "More princely hospitality than his," he wrote, "no man ever received, or more kindly companionship; but as might have been expected, we agreed neither in temperament nor in method. . . . Apart

months. We are, indeed, neither of us in a particularly cheerful humor, and very often, I think, succeed in making each other reciprocally miserable to an amazing extent; but we do each other more good than harm — at least he does me, for he knows much just of the part of the world of which I know nothing. He is a very noble fellow — if only he could see a crow without wanting to shoot it to pieces.

We made a great mistake in staying half our time at Chamouni, which is not a place for sulky people by any means. I hope you have got a letter which Stillman wrote to you from St. Martin's, where we thought much of you, and I looked very wistfully often at the door of the room in which you introduced me to your Mother and Sisters, and at the ravine where we had our morning walk. . . .

from questions of art, he always remains to me one of the largest and noblest of all the men I have known, liberal and generous beyond limit, with a fineness of sympathy in certain directions and delicacy of organization quite womanly. Nothing could shake my admiration for his moral character, or abate my reverence for him as a humanist."

DENMARK HILL, 4th *November*, '60.

DEAR NORTON, — I had your kind and delightful letter, with Lowell's, on Lake Lucerne, and waited till I could give some tolerable account of myself before answering it. Which time of tolerableness seems hardly likely to come at present, for I am resting now, and find myself in a general state of collapse. I hate the sight of pen and paper, and can't write so much as a note without an effort. I don't think about anything, and feel consequently like Nothing, — my chief sense of existence lately having been in thinking or trying to think. Stillman knows all about me and will tell you whatever you want to know. When I begin to think at all I get into states of disgust and fury at the way the mob is going on (meaning by mob, chiefly Dukes, crown princes, and such like persons) that I choke; and have to go to the British Museum and look at Penguins till I get cool. I find Penguins at present the only comfort in life. One feels everything

in the world so sympathetically ridiculous; one can't be angry when one looks at a Penguin.

I enjoyed my Swiss sojourning with Stillman exceedingly — I don't know what I should have done without him, indeed, for I could n't work, and yet moped when I did nothing. Even as it was we moped a little, both of us being considerably out of heart; but we did better than either of us would have done by himself.

I 've nothing to tell you either, specially pleasant. I think Rossetti is getting on, but he does such absurd things in the midst of his beautiful ones that he 'll never get the public with him. He has just been and painted a Madonna with black hair in ringlets, like a George the 2nd wig, and black complexion like a Mulatto — *nigra sum* — not that he meant that, but he took a fancy to the face.

It is very pretty, however, to see how much better he draws his wife than any other

model. When he was merely in love with her he used to exaggerate all the faults of her face and think them beauties, but now that he 's married he just draws her rightly, and so much more tenderly than other women that all his harshness and eccentricity vanish whenever she sits.

I see hardly anybody now. I 've got so fastidious and exacting that I never praise anybody enough to please them — so they turn me out of their rooms in all haste. One or two love me; but though I admire their work, it 's quite out of my way. Munroe the sculptor, like all sculptors, lives in a nasty wood-house full of clay and water-tubs, so I can't go without catching cold. Jones[1] is always doing things which need one to get into a state of Dantesque Visionariness before one can see them, and I can't be troubled to get myself up, it tires me so. So I make old William Hunt draw me Nuts and Oyster-shells, and other non-exciting objects. I think

[1] Burne-Jones.

I may as well, now, instead of Shells have Oysters. I'll ask him. Read my last bit of Political Economy, please, in "Cornhill Magazine" for this month.[1] I think there's some force in it. And take my best love, and give some of it to your mother and sisters, and believe me

Ever affectionately and gratefully yours,

J. Ruskin.

[Denmark Hill] 25 *February*, 1861.

My Dear Norton, — I received your kindest letter this morning. I am so glad your memory is truer than your note-book about me. Am I to write about myself then? First, thank you for the anecdote about the Bishops, from the St. Louis book, which I

[1] This "bit of Political Economy," well worth reading, was the fourth and last of the essays published in the *Cornhill* under the general title of "Unto this Last;" words taken from the parable of the "householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers unto his vineyard:" *I will give unto this last as even unto thee.* Matthew, xx, 14. The magazine could admit no more of these papers, against which its public protested as attacking the very foundations of the accepted politico-economical creed.

will get directly. I never heard of it.[1] I should like you to have two leaves of the St. Louis missal;[2] it is imperfect as it is (wanting three psalms) so that there is no harm in its losing two leaves more, since they will give you pleasure, and be more useful in America than here. If these sink on the way, I will send two others, — but I hope they won't sink. One, from the later part of the book, is all charged with St. Louis's crest; the other is an exquisite example of 13th Century linear ornamentation. The book, I grieve to say, was in all probability never in his hands; not only it wants three psalms, but some of its leaves are unfinished. (By the way, I will send an unfinished one as well, so that will be three.) There is no shadow of

[1] *Mémoires de Jean Sire de Joinville, ou Histoire et Chronique du Roi Saint Louis.* The most delightful personal narrative and biographical sketch which the Middle Ages have bequeathed to us. It is incomparable in its simplicity, sincerity, and vividness.

[2] This missal, one of the most precious illuminated manuscripts in existence, is now in the possession of Mr. Henry Yates Thompson, of London, a chief treasure in his matchless collection.

doubt of its having been done for him, but it must have been while he was away on his last fatal crusade, and it then remained unfinished in the Sainte Chapelle Convent.

Touching my plans, they are all simplified into one quiet and long: — to draw as well as I can without complaining or shrinking because that is ill, for ten years at least, if I live so long: in hopes of doing, or directing some few serviceable engraved copies from Turner and Titian. I am getting now into some little power of work again. My eyes serve me well, and as I have no joy in what I do (the utmost I can do being to keep myself from despair about it and do it as I would break stones), I am not tempted to overwork myself. I hope to finish my essay on Political Economy some day soon, then to write no more. I felt so strongly the need of clear physical health in order to do this, and that my present life so destroyed my health, that I was in terrible doubt as to what to do for a long time this last summer

and winter. It seemed to me that to keep any clear-headedness, free from intellectual trouble and other pains, no life would do for me but one as like Veronese's as might be, and I was seriously, and despairingly, thinking of going to Paris or Venice and breaking away from all modern society and opinion, and doing I don't know what. Intense scorn of all I had hitherto done or thought, still intenser scorn of other people's doings and thinkings, especially in religion; the perception of colossal power more and more in Titian and of weakness in purism, and almost unendurable solitude in my own home, only made more painful to me by parental love which did not and never could help me, and which was cruelly hurtful without knowing it; and terrible discoveries in the course of such investigation as I made into grounds of old faith — were all concerned in this: and it would have been, but for the pain which I could not resolve to give my parents.

I don't in the least know what might have

been the end of it, if a little child (only 13 last summer) had n't put her fingers on the helm at the right time, and chosen to make a pet of herself for me, and her mother to make a friend of herself . . . certainly the ablest and I think the best woman I have ever known. . . . For the present I settle down to my work, without the least further care as to what is to come of it — having no pleasure in it and expecting none, but believing that I am in a better state than I was, understanding a few things about Angelico again, which I had lost, and do not think that I shall now lose any more.

You have also done me no little good, and I don't feel alone, now that I 've you on the other side of the Atlantic, and Rosie and her mother by the Mediterranean, all wishing me well, and I don't think there 's any chance now of my going all to pieces. You see I answer letters more prettily than I used to, don't I?

So there 's a letter — about myself and

nothing else. I wonder I have the face to send it, but you know you asked me once to write you a sort of account of the things that made me, as you were pleased to say, "what I am," which is at present an entirely puzzled, helpless, and disgusted old gentleman.

As for things that have influenced me, I believe hard work, love of justice and of beauty, good nature and great vanity, have done all of me that was worth doing. I've had my heart broken, ages ago, when I was a boy — then mended, cracked, beaten in, kicked about old corridors, and finally, I think, flattened fairly out. I've picked up what education I've got in an irregular way — and it's very little. I suppose that on the whole as little has been got into me and out of me as under any circumstances was probable; it is true, had my father made me his clerk I might have been in a fair way of becoming a respectable Political Economist in the manner of Ricardo or Mill — but granting liberty and power of travelling, and work-

ing as I chose, I suppose everything I've chosen to have been about as wrong as wrong could be. I ought not to have written a word; but should have merely waited on Turner as much as he would have let me, putting in writing every word that fell from him, and drawing hard. By this time, I might have been an accomplished draughtsman, a fair musician, and a thoroughly good scholar in art literature, and in good health besides. As it is, I've written a few second-rate books, which nobody minds; I can't draw, I can't play nor sing, I can't ride, I walk worse and worse, I can't digest. And I can't help it.— There! Good-bye, love to your mother and sisters.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

Sunday, 2nd *June*, 1861.

Dear Norton, — I am so very grateful to Miss Agassiz, it is so nice of her.[1] I do

[1] In the last volume of *Modern Painters* Ruskin had written of the arrangement of leaves on the stem. Since its

not know anything about these things. If I get strength again to go on with leaves, I will begin with this letter of hers and try to work on. I 've been so uncomfortable I never have had the heart to write to you. I set to work really the day I wrote, to choose your missal leaves, and could not please myself — some were not of nice psalms, nor some of nice letters — and so it was n't done and was n't sent, and all 's wrong, and I don't know what to do now; but truly hope to send the leaves, taken at random (for I shall never be able to choose) to-morrow, and to abuse Rossetti into sending your drawing; never were such wicked, good-for-nothing people as he and I. I stayed at home, as I told you I should, and drew, till I found finally it was of no use to draw; I never shall draw well. Then I tried to find out where I was in geology and the sciences leaning on it, and I 'm reading in a

publication the late Chauncey Wright had worked out the principle. Miss Agassiz, at my request, made some drawings to illustrate it, which I was glad to send to Ruskin, with her explanatory letter.

sick, careless way; the first books I opened of the modern writers showing me that I never now could recover the lost ground of the last twenty years so as to know anything thoroughly. Then I got a cough and fell ill — and so remain — not caring much about it, though I know I ought to care, nor having the heart to go anywhere; and it 's no use your writing to me, because I know all you can say about it. I 've been nearly as hard put to it before, only I was n't so old, and had not the great religious Dark Tower to assault, or get shut up in by Giant Despair. Little Rosie is terribly frightened about me, and writes letters to get me to come out of Bye-path Meadow — and I won't; she can't write any more just now, for she 's given herself rheumatism in her fingers by dabbling all day in her hill river, catching crayfish. And Bye-path Meadow *is* bad walking in this Will-of-the-Wispish time; but as for that straight old road between the red brick walls, half Babel,

quarter fiery furnace, and quarter chopped straw, I can't do it any more — Meadow of some sort I must have, though I go no further.

Well, what have I to tell you? Of Stillman I have not heard for a month, and fear to write. So many melancholy things are happening to me all at once that I shrink from asking. Rossetti, as you know I suppose, is married (Beatrice in your drawing). She was very ill for long before her marriage, but is getting stronger now, and he is looking well. Jones[1] is married, too — he has got a little country violet with blue eyes and long eyelashes, and as good and sweet as can be. I took them both to the theatre the other night. She had only been twice before in her life, and had never seen a ballet — and unluckily there was one, and the deep astonished pain of the creature, not in prudery, but in suddenly seeing into an abyss of human life, both in suffering and

[1] Burne-Jones.

in crime, of which she had had no previous conception, was quite tragic.

17th June. I was ashamed to send you that, and this will be very little better. But I am a little better, and have resolved to go and live for some time at a French fishing seaport — small and out of the way, and to learn to sail a French lugger and catch dog-fish. After that I 'll think of learning something else. I shall make friends with the little fishing children and with their priest, and read about the Madonna to them, and some Arabian nights and other apocryphal literature besides, and I hope to recover a little so, — what with conchology, sunsets, and early bedtime, besides.

I 'll soon, if I don't get drowned, write and tell you how I get on with the fishing. The Missal leaves are chosen, and verily come with this.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

Kindest regards to your mother and sisters.

FROM JOHN JAMES RUSKIN.

DENMARK HILL, 3 *August*, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have had the pleasure to receive your most kind Letter of 16 July repeating an Invitation previously sent to my Son, who will not fail to appreciate your friendship and to value, as his Mother and I do, these marks of your continued remembrance and regard, Remembrance and Regard which we well know to be mutual.

Of his going to America we have neither spoken nor written to him, because although we have both hoped and desired he might not have occasion to take any long voyage during our Lives, our first thought now is for his Health, and if that could be benefited it is not the crossing of the Atlantic nor the Sea of Troubles raging on the other side of it, that would now dismay us. It is a most pleasing feature in your Letter that no allusion to any political troubles is found in it. I doubt not my Son has already answered your Letter and thanked you and family for all

your Kindness. He has been at Boulogne since 17 June, and is recovering from the exhaustion complained of, and has got quite well of a severe cold which he took with him. I am happy to say Dr. Watson, his Physician, saw little the matter with my Son, and his Mother and I have heard more of his being out of Health from those to whom he has complained than from himself, which, however, might arise from consideration for us.

It seems to me to be as much a want of purpose as a want of Health. He has done a good deal, but thinks he has done little, and all to little purpose.

He was somewhat wearied with work, and I think is just beginning to get wearied with want of work and with not exactly knowing what to turn to next, but I should be sorry to see him begin another work till a pleasant and long Tour and Journey or Voyage had recruited his frame and spirits. I never saw him less than cheerful in society, and when

Carlyle comes to see him, and with some Ladies, and a few favorite Children, his spirits are exuberant. He has promised to pay a visit to an interesting family, the Latouches, near Dublin, but the crowd following Majesty there may keep him back.

Referring to his own letters, allow me to repeat my warmest acknowledgments for your Kindness and for that of your family, in which Mrs. Ruskin joins, as she does moreover in kindest regards to yourself, your Mother and Sisters.

I am, My dear Sir,
Yours very truly,
JOHN JAMES RUSKIN.

HOLYHEAD, 26 *August*, 1861.

DEAR NORTON, — Glad, and glad, and glad again have I been of your letters — though I do not answer them, because if I did, it would make you sorry. This last, however, I must — though but to say it is impossible for me to come to America. The one thing

I need seems to be, for the present, rest; and the power of slowly following some branch of natural history or other peaceful knowledge; not that natural history is in one sense peaceful, but terrific; its abysses of life and pain, of diabolic ingenuity, merciless condemnation, irrevocable change, infinite scorn, endless advance, immeasurable scale of beings incomprehensible to each other, every one important in its own sight and a grain of dust in its Creator's — it makes me giddy and desolate beyond all speaking; but it is better than the effort and misery of work for anything human.

It is of no use for me to talk or hear talking as yet. What can be said for good, I have for the most part well heard and thought of — no one much comforts me but Socrates. Is not this a glorious bit of anti-materialism, summing nearly all that can be said: Εἰδὼς ὅτι γῆς τε μικρὸν μέρος ἐν τῷ σώματι, πολλῆς οὔσης, ἔχεις, καὶ ὑγροῦ βραχὺ, πολλοῦ ὄντος, . . . νοῦν δὲ μόνον ἄρα οὐδαμοῦ

ὄντα σε εὐτυχῶς πῶς δοκεῖς συναρπάσαι ; καὶ τάδε ὑπερμεγέθη καὶ πλῆθος ἄπειρα δι' ἀφροσύνην τινὰ οὕτως οἷει εὐτάκτως ἔχειν ;[1] (*Memorabilium*, i, 4.)

This is all well, but it is to me so fearful a discovery to find how God has allowed all who have variously sought him in the most earnest way, to be blinded — how Puritan — monk — Brahmin — churchman — Turk — are all merely names for different madnesses and ignorances; how nothing prevails finally but a steady, worldly-wise labour — comfortable — resolute — fearless — full of animal life — affectionate — compassionate. — I think I see how one ought to live, now, but my own life is lost — gone by. I looked for another world, and find there is only this, and that is past for me: what message I have

[1] "Knowing that you have in your body but a small bit of the earth which is vast, and a little of the water which is vast . . . do you think that you alone have by some good fortune seized for yourself intelligence which exists nowhere else? and that this immense and countless assemblage of things is maintained in order by something devoid of reason."

given is all wrong: has to be all re-said, in another way, and is, so said, almost too terrible to be serviceable. For the present I am dead-silent. Our preachers drive me mad with contempt if I ever read or listen to a word; our politicians, mad with indignation. I cannot speak to the first any more than I could to pantaloons in a bad pantomime, or to the last more than to lizards in a marsh. I am working at geology, at Greek — weakly — patiently — caring for neither; trying to learn to write, and hold my pen properly — reading comparative anatomy, and gathering molluscs, with disgust.

I have been staying at Boulogne nearly two months. I went out mackerel fishing, and saw the fish glitter and choke, and the sea foam by night. I learned to sail a French lugger, and a good pilot at last left me alone on deck at the helm in mid channel, with all sail set, and steady breeze. It felt rather grand; but in fact would have been a good deal grander if it had been nearer shore —

but I am getting on, if I don't get too weak to hold a helm, for I can't digest anything I think. I tried Wales after that, but the moorland hills made me melancholy — utterly. I 've come on here to get some rougher sailing if I can — then I 'm going over to Ireland for a day or two. . . . Then I 'm going straight to Switzerland, for the fall of the leaf; and what next I don't know. There 's enough of myself for you. . . . I 'm so glad you think hopefully about the war. It interests me no more than a squabble between black and red ants. It does not matter whether people are free or not, as far as I can see, till when free they know how to choose a master. Write to me, please, *poste restante*, Interlachen, Switzerland. I 'm hoping to find out something of the making of the Jungfrau, if the snows don't come too soon, and my poor 42-year-old feet still serve me a little. . . .

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin.

DENMARK HILL, 6 *January*, '62.

DEAR NORTON, — At home again at last, after six months' rest. I have two letters of yours unanswered. But after six months of doing nothing I feel wholly incapable of ever doing anything any more, so I can't answer them. Only, so many thanks, for being nice and writing them. Thanks for "Atlantic." Lowell is delicious in the bits. "The coppers ain't all tails,"[1] and such like; but I can't make out how it bears on the business — that 's laziness too, I suppose. Also, for said business itself, I am too lazy to care anything about it, unless I hear there 's some chance of you or Lowell or Emerson's being shot, in which case I should remonstrate. For the rest, if people want to fight, my opinion is that fighting will be good for them, and I suppose when they 're tired,

[1] But groutin' ain't no kin' o' use; an' ef the fust throw fails,
Why, up an' try agin, thet 's all, — the coppers ain't all tails.
Birdofredum Sawin, Esq., to Mr. Hosea Biglow.

they 'll stop. They 've no Titians nor anything worth thinking about, to spoil — and the rest is all one to *me*.

I 've been in Switzerland from the 20th September to day after Christmas. Got home on last day of year. It 's quite absurd to go to Switzerland in the summer. Mid-November is the time. I 've seen a good deal — but nothing ever to come near it. The long, low light, — the floating frost cloud — the divine calm and melancholy — and the mountains all opal below and pearl above. There 's no talking about it, nor giving you any idea of it. The day before Christmas was a clear frost in dead-calm sunlight. All the pines of Pilate covered with hoar-frost — level golden sunbeams — purple shadows — and a mountain of virgin silver.

I 've been drawing — painting — a little; with some self-approval. I 've tired of benevolence and eloquence and everything that 's proper, and I 'm going to cultivate myself and nobody else, and see what will come of

that. I 'm beginning to learn a little Latin and Greek for the first time in my life, and find that Horace and I are quite of a mind about things in general. I never hurry nor worry; I don't speak to anybody about anything; if anybody talks to me, I go into the next room. I sometimes find the days very long, and the nights longer; then I try to think it is at the worst better than being dead; and so long as I can keep clear of toothache, I think I shall do pretty well.

Now this is quite an abnormally long and studied epistle, for me, so mind you make the most of it — and give my love to your Mother and Sisters, and believe me

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

Denmark Hill, 19th *January*, 1862.

Dear Norton, — I am at home again, or at least in the place which ought to be home; but I cannot rest — the fields around me all built over, and instead of being refreshed and

made able for work by my long holiday, I only feel more discontented with all around me. One weight upon my mind, slight but irksome, is, however, at last removed. Rossetti was always promising to retouch your drawing,[1] and I, growling and muttering, suffered him still to keep it by him in the hope his humour would one day change. At last it has changed; he has modified and in every respect so much advanced and bettered it, that though not one of his first-rate works, and still painfully quaint and hard, it is nevertheless worthy of him, and will be to you an enjoyable possession. It is exceedingly full and interesting in fancy; and brilliant in colour, though the mode of colour-treatment is too much like that of the Knave of hearts. But at last it is really on the way to you; and to-morrow I go in to give him the first sitting for the portrait, and will get it done as fast as may be.

[1] The drawing known under the title of "Before the Battle."

I am no better than I was last winter — perhaps worse — certainly more depressed; but the year has been a hard one for me in various ways, not likely again to occur; and I gained somewhat in the summer in spite of these — perhaps this year will bring better chances. But all things seem to go wrong at present. Jones, who promised to be the sweetest of all the P. R. B. designers, has just been attacked by spitting of blood, and, I fear, dangerously. I have earache, indigestion, and appear on the whole to be only beginning my walk through the "Rue St. Thomas de l'Enfer" on the way to "das ewige Nein." My Father and Mother are — the one well — the other patient — under much pain which accompanies every movement. She reads good books and makes herself happy, and me profoundly sorrowful. Is happiness, then, only to be got thus? Are lies, after all, the only comfort of old age; and are they the sons of God, instead of the Devil's?

Sunday, 9th February. I kept this note

by me to be quite sure the drawing had gone, and to tell you the portrait is in progress, and Rossetti seems pleased with it. I have just got Holmes' poems and am *so* delighted with them, at least with some of them. "The Boys," and "Sister Caroline," [?] and some other such, more especially. Jones is a little better — no more blood coming.

I am trying to draw a little. I 've done the coil of hair over the Venus de Medici's right ear seventeen times unsuccessfully within the last month, and have got quite ill with mortification.

Did I tell you the winter was the real time for Switzerland? It is. Fancy being able to walk everywhere among the wild torrent beds, and see all their dreadfullest places, with only a green streamlet singing among sheaves of ice — as a gleaner among laid corn. And such sunshine, long and low, rosy half the day.

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin.

DENMARK HILL, 28th *April*, 1862.

DEAR NORTON, — . . . Where one's friends are, one's home ought to be, I know — whenever they want us; but every day finds me, nevertheless, sickening more and more for perfect rest — less and less able for change of scene or thought, least of all for any collision with the energies of such a country and race as yours. Nay, you will say, it would not be collision, but communion — you could give me some of your life. I know you would if you could. But what could you do with a creature who actually does not mean to enter the doors of this Exhibition of all nations, within five miles of his own door?

14th *May*.

I have kept this hoping to be able to tell you some cheerful thing about myself, but few such occur to me. To-morrow I leave England for Switzerland; and whether I stay in Switzerland or elsewhere, to England I shall seldom return. I must find a home —

or at least the Shadow of a Roof of my own, somewhere; certainly not here.

May all good be with you and yours.

Ever your affectionate

J. RUSKIN.

Look in "Fraser's Magazine" for next month — June — please.[1]

MORNEX, HAUTE SAVOIE, 28th *August*, 1862.

DEAR NORTON, — It seems to me hardly possible I can have left your last kind letter with the photograph unanswered, but it seems also I have become capable of anything. I have to-day your pretty little note asking where I am. Six miles from Geneva on the way to Chamouni I am in body (if the wretched thing I live in can be called a body). But where I am in soul I know not, that part

[1] It was to look for the first of the four essays, afterward collected in a volume under the title of *Munera Pulveris*, intended as a preface to an exhaustive treatise on Political Economy, which "I resolved," wrote Ruskin, "to make the central work of my life." They were written in the autumn of 1861, partly at Milan, partly at the pretty village of Mornex on the southeastern slope of the Mont Salève, not far from Geneva.

of me having disappeared for the present. During the summer I was at Milan, trying to copy some frescos of Luini's. I suppose it will be the last drawing work I shall ever try, for all my strength and heart is failing. You asked in one of your last letters how I had got into this state: do not ask. Why should I, if there be any reason for it, afflict you too, or trouble your faith? Besides, I have no strength for writing. All my work has been done hurriedly and with emotion, and now the reaction has come. I found myself utterly prostrated by the effort made at Milan — so gave in on my way home, and have rented a house for a month on the slope of the Salève. I saunter about the rocks, and gather a bit of thistledown or chickweed — break a crystal — read a line or two of Horace or Xenophon — and try to feel that life is worth having — unsuccessfully enough. In short, I have no power of resting — and I can't work without bringing on giddiness, pains in the teeth, and at last, loss of all

power of thought. The doctors all say "rest, rest." I sometimes wish I could see Medusa.

And you can't help me. Ever so much love can't help me — only time can, and patience. You say "does it give you no pleasure to have done people good?" No — for all seems just as little to me as if I were dying (it is by no means certain I'm not) and the vastness of the horror of this world's blindness and misery opens upon me — as unto dying eyes the glimmering square (and I don't hear the birds). . . .

As for your American war, I still say as I said at first, — If they want to fight, they deserve to fight, and to suffer. It is entirely horrible and abominable, but nothing else would do. Do you remember Mrs. Browning's curse on America? I said at the time "she had no business to curse any country but her own." But she, as it appeared afterwards, was dying, and knew better than I against whom her words were to be recorded. We have come in for a proper share of suf-

fering — but the strange thing is how many innocent suffer, while the guiltiest — Derby and d'Israeli, and such like — are shooting grouse.

Well, as soon as I get at all better, if I do, I 'll write you again. And I love you always, and will. I am so glad you liked Rossetti's banner so much. Remember me affectionately to your mother and sisters. Write to Denmark Hill. I stay among the hills all winter, but don't know where yet, so D. Hill is the only safe address.

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin.

Mornex, Haute Savoie, France,

Shortest day, 1862.

Dear Norton, — It is of no use writing till I 'm better; though till I am, I can't write a pleasant word, even to you. I 've had a weary time of it since last I wrote, and have been quite finally worried and hurt, and the upshot of it is that I 've come away here

to live among the hills, and get what sober remnant of life I can, in peace, where there are no machines, yet, nor people, nor talk, nor trouble, but of the winds.

I 've become a Pagan, too; and am trying hard to get some substantial hope of seeing Diana in the pure glades; or Mercury in the clouds (Hermes, I mean, not that rascally Jew-God of the Latins). Only I can't understand what they want one to sacrifice to them for. I can't kill one of my beasts for any God of them all — unless they 'll come and dine with me, and I 've such a bad cook that I 'm afraid there 's no chance of that.

You sent me some book, did n't you, a little while ago? I 've been in such confusion, bringing things over here from England, and sending Turners to Brit. Museum, and upside-downing myself in general, that I don't know what has happened or come. I 'm bitterly sorry to leave my father and mother, but my health was failing altogether and I had no choice.

I 'm only in lodgings yet — seven miles south of Geneva, nearer the Alps; but I 'm going to build myself a nest, high on the hills, where they are green. Meantime, I 've a little garden with a spring in it, and a gray rough granite wall, and a vine or two; and then a dingle about three hundred feet deep, and a sweet chestnut and pine wood opposite; and then Mont du Reposoir, and Mont Blanc, and the aiguilles of Chamouni, which I can see from my pillow, against the dawn. And behind me, the slope of the Salève, up 2000 feet. I can get to the top and be among the gentians any day after my morning reading and before four o'clock dinner. Then I 've quiet sunset on the aiguilles, and a little dreaming by the fire, and so to sleep. Your horrid war troubles me sometimes — the roar of it seeming to clang in the blue sky. You poor mad things — what will become of you?

Send me a line to say if you get this.

After saying nothing so long, I want this to go quickly.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN.

MORNEX, 10th *February*, 1863.

MY DEAR NORTON, — Glad was I of your letter, for I had been anxious about you, fearing illness, or disturbance of your happiness by this war. It is a shame that you are so comfortable — but I 'm glad of it, and I shall delight in those 13th century lectures.

It is no use talking about your war. There is a religious phrensy on such of you as are good for anything, just as wild, foolish, and fearful as St. Dominic's and as obstinate as de Montfort's. Mahomet's was mild, Christian-like and rational, in comparison. I have not, however, seen a single word, spoken or written, by any American since the war began, which would justify me in assuming that there was any such noble phrensy in the matter; but as Lowell and you are in it, I

am obliged to own the nobility, and only wish I could put you both in straight waistcoats. The miserablest idiocy of the whole has been your mixing up a fight for dominion (the most insolent and tyrannical, and the worst conducted, in all history) with a *soi disant* fight for liberty. If you want the slaves to be free, let their masters go free first, in God's name. If they don't like to be governed by you, let them govern themselves. *Then*, treating them as a stranger state, if you like to say, "You shall let that black fellow go, or" — etc., as a brave boy would fight another for a fag at Eton — do so; but you know perfectly well no fight could be got up on those terms; and that this fight is partly for money, partly for vanity, partly (as those wretched Irish whom you have inveigled into it show) for wild anarchy and the Devil's cause and crown, everywhere. As for your precious proclamation —

"A gift of that which is not to be *given*
By all the assembled powers of earth and heaven" —

if I had it here — there 's a fine north wind blowing, and I would give it to the first boy I met to fly it at his kite's tail. Not but that it may do mischief enough, as idle words have done and will do, to end of time.

As for myself, I am a little better than when I wrote last. I know you would do me all the good you could, and give me all kinds of nice sympathy; but it is all of no use just now. Only don't let me *lose* you, but stay, for me to come and ask for affection again when it will be good to me. I am lost just now in various wonder and sorrow, not to be talked of. I care mainly about my teeth and liver; if those would keep right I could fight the rest of it all: but they don't. I *am* resting, and mean to rest, drawing, chiefly, and sauntering and scrambling. The only thing I shall keep doing — a sentence of, sometimes — only when I can't help it — is political economy. Look at the next "Fraser's Magazine" (for March); there are, or I hope will be, some nice little bits about slavery in it. . . . There 's no building

begun yet: I 'm trying the winter and spring climate first, and finding out things by talking to the peasants. For this spring I 'm well enough off,— with a view from my bedroom window of all the valley of the Arve from the Salève to Bonneville, and all the St. Martin's mountains beyond. But I mean to settle nearer Annecy; this is not quite warm enough. . . .

Affectionate regards to your mother and sisters.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

As soon as I 've got a house, I 'll ask you to send me something American — a slave, perhaps. I 've a great notion of a black boy in a green jacket and purple cap — in Paul Veronese's manner. As for concentrated wisdom, if I have n't enough to make me hold my tongue, I have n't enough to put on the end of it.

MORNEX, 10th *March*, 1863.

MY DEAR-EST NORTON, — I shall give you the dissyllable henceforward; no one else has it but my father and mother, and my pet Rosie, to whom, because of the passage denying my saintship, I shall send your letter; she canonized me once, but mourns over my present state of mind, which she has managed to find out somehow. I shall send her your letter that she may see that people can yet love me who won't give me any votive candles (not that she ever burnt many for me, or ever will), for she has been scolding me frightfully, and says, "How could one love you, if you were a Pagan?" She was a marvellous little thing when she was younger, but — which has been one of the things that have troubled me — there came on some over-excitement of the brain, causing occasional loss of consciousness, and now she often seems only half herself, as if partly dreaming. I've not seen her for a year, nor shall probably, for many a year to come (if I've

many to live, which is hardly likely). But I am a little better, and this quiet may bring me round to some vitality again.

Well, I will do as you say, and write a little word daily, or other-daily, for you. I shall like it, for the loneliness is very great, if the peace in which I am at present [a word is apparently omitted here], and the peace is only as if I had buried myself in a tuft of grass on a battlefield wet with blood, for the cry of the earth about me is in my ears continually if I do not lay my head to the very ground. The folly and horror of humanity enlarge to my eyes daily. But I will not write you melancholy letters. I will tell you of what I do and think that may give you pleasure. I should do myself no good and you, sometimes, perhaps harm, if I wrote what was in my heart, or out of it. The surface thought and work I will tell you.

I wrote you a letter the other day — you either have it by this time and are very angry with me for once, or have it not, and are

forgiving me for supposed neglect of your kind last letter.

This 10th of March, then, to begin diary: I had headache yesterday, and was late, late up this morning. Read a bit of the first Georgic at breakfast, and wondered what *laetum siliqua quassante legumen* precisely meant. Had it been *pease blossom*, I should have accepted the *laetus;* or when I was a boy, and got the peas to shell, should have accepted it for myself, not for the pod. After that I wrote about ten words of notes for a lecture I have promised to give this season in London on the stratified mountains of Savoy.

Then I drew the profile of the blossom of the purple nettle, and tried to color it, and could n't, and tried to find out why it was called *Lamium*[1] and could n't.

Then I walked up and down the room watching the pines shake in fierce March

[1] Had Ruskin had Dr. Asa Gray's admirable *Manual* at hand, he would have learned that the name was from λαιμός, *the throat*, in allusion to the ringent corolla.

wind, which I was afraid of bringing on headache again if I went out in.

Then I got your letter, and was pleased. Then I dined at half-past two, and read some of the papers.

Then I went to my other house (for I 've two houses), which looks up the valley of the Arve, and drew some of a careful drawing I 'm making of it — very slowly and feebly.

Then I came back here and swung logs of wood about, to warm myself, and wondered why we had a wretched four-legged body to take care of, with a nasty spine all down the back of it and a sternum in front. Then I had tea, and thought what I should, and what I should n't write to you. Then I sate down to write this.

Of course you 're not to be diaryed to that extent every day, yet I 'll put down anything that interests me.

Do letters come pretty regularly in these pleasant times of yours ?

Remember me affectionately to your mother and sisters.

Ever affectionately and gratefully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

I 'll get that book of Jean Paul's.

I know well that happiness is in little things, — if anywhere, — but it is essentially within one, and being within, *seems* to fasten on little things. When I have been unhappy, I have heard an opera from end to end, and it seemed the shrieking of winds; when I am happy, a sparrow's chirp is delicious to me. But it is not the chirp that makes me happy, but I that make *it* sweet.

[DENMARK HILL] 29th *July*, '63.

DEAR NORTON, — I answer your kind note instantly — to-day. I *would* have rejoiced with you, if I could have rejoiced in anything, but the world is much too horrible in its aspect to me to allow me to take pleasure in even the best thing that can happen in it. That a child is born — even to my

friend — is to me no consolation for the noble grown souls of men slaughtered daily through his follies, and mine.

I kept a diary for you a little while, but when I read it, it was loathsome to me, and I burnt it. I am still very unwell, and tormented between the longing for rest and for lovely life, and the sense of the terrific call of human crime for resistance and of human misery for help — though it seems to me as the voice of a river of blood which can but sweep me down in the midst of its black clots, helpless. What I shall do I know not — or if dying is the only thing possible. I would have written to you, but it is no use talking *of* myself — nor *to* you, in your present blind, sweet, blessed life, as of birds and flowers; I would fain not trouble it (more than these short lines must do) but you cannot give me share of it.

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin.

I am at home with my father and mother; am going back to Savoy for the autumn, but hope to spend winter here.

I find only a ragged scrap of foreign paper, but it would have been of no use to take a larger — for I can't talk of things. It is not theology that plagues me, but base injustice, selfishness, and utter scorn of thought or truth.

CHAMOUNI, *October* 6, 1863.

MY DEAR NORTON, — I 've no heart to write to you while this war is going on, nor much to write of anything going on here; but I have been asked to write, and beg of you to send us, or put us in the way of getting, the pamphlet or magazine (Q. "Atlantic"?) which contains Oliver W. H.'s speech on the 4th of last July. There is also an American periodical which gives an account of a blind man's interview with Carlyle — can you tell me anything of this?

I hope you are well, in that walled Para-

dise of yours — don't try to get out. There 's a great deal too much elbow room in Hades (for all that the roads that way are crowded) I can assure you.

I 'm trying to get interested in geology again, and should be, thoroughly, if there were any chance of living long enough to make anything out. But since my time crystallography alone has become a science for nine lives, and there are seven new elements or so, names ending in Um, in Chemistry.

For the rest, I 'm a little better, I believe — but very slowly. Send word to Denmark Hill, please.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

After this letter a long interval followed without a word. Ruskin's feeling in regard to our war, and his want of sympathy with those whose hearts were engaged in it, checked for the time the desire for the interchange of letters. It was a period in which a great change took place in his own life, to

which, indeed, he made no reference when, breaking a ten months' silence, he sent to me the brief and bitter letter which follows.

[Denmark Hill] 6th *August*, 1864.

My dear Norton, — The truth is, I am quite too lazy with a deathful sort of laziness, to write. I hate the feeling of having to drive pen up and down lines, quite unconquerably, and I have really nothing to say. I am busy with Greek and Egyptian mythology, and all sorts of problems in life and death — and your American business is so entirely horrible to me that, somehow, it cuts you off from all possibility of my telling you any of my thoughts. It is just as if I saw you washing your hands in blood, and whistling — and sentimentalizing to me. I know you don't know what you are about and are just as good and dear as ever you were, but I simply can't write to you while you are living peaceably in Bedlam. I am getting my house in order, and perhaps shall die as soon as

I 've done it — but I 'm a little better. When I 'm quite settled, I will write to you with some general facts.

Ever, with faithful regards to your mother and sisters,

Yours affectionately,

J. Ruskin.

On the 3d of March, 1864, Ruskin's father had died, an old man in his seventy-ninth year, but with his faculties clear and strong to the end. "By his father's death," says Mr. Harrison in his "Life of Ruskin," "Ruskin inherited a fortune of £157,000[1] in addition to a considerable property in houses and land, the whole of which estate the elder had accumulated by industry and sagacity in legitimate business. He was not only an entirely honest merchant, but a man of great generosity, of shrewd judgment, and of persevering culture in poetry and art. His erratic genius of a son, on whom he had lavished his wealth and his anxieties, had long parted from him in ideas

[1] His father left to Ruskin outright £120,000, and to his mother £37,000.

of religion as well as economics. But the affection between them remained unimpaired."

The loss of his father was a graver calamity to Ruskin than a similar loss is to most men of forty-five years old. Although of late he had lived much apart from his parents, and had followed his own ways of conduct and of thought, yet his father's good judgment and restraining counsel still had weight with him, and exercised a wholesome though limited influence.

Ruskin's education and pursuits had not fitted him for the charge of a large property. But his now independent wealth gave him full opportunity for the satisfaction of his lavish impulses and the gratification of his tastes. The immediate duties which fell upon him in connection with the winding up of his father's affairs, and in the attendance upon his mother, now more than eighty years old, kept him in England during 1864 and 1865, and the winter of 1866.

He was not idle, his mind was incessantly active; he wrote much on a great variety of subjects. In 1865 he published, under the

enigmatic title of "Sesame and Lilies," two lectures, one on the worth and use of books, the other on the ideals and duties of women; in 1866 came a series of lectures on "Work," "Traffic," "War," and "The Future of England," gathered into a volume called the "Crown of Wild Olive;" in the same year appeared the "Ethics of the Dust," lectures given to a girls' school in the country, professedly on the elements of Crystallization, but with "the purpose of awaking in the minds of young girls a vital interest in the subject of their study." Nor were these by any means all his writings.

A year passed from the date of the last letter before I received another from him.

DENMARK HILL, 15th *August*, 1865.

MY DEAR NORTON, — I have just received your book on the portraits, which is very right and satisfactory, and pleasant to have done.[1] There won't be many old walls left,

[1] *The Original Portraits of Dante*, a privately printed volume on occasion of the celebration in Florence of the sixth centenary of Dante's birth.

frescoed or whitewashed either, in Florence now. I should have liked to have seen it once again, before they build iron bridges over Arno, but it is no matter.

Now you've done fighting, I can talk to you a little again, but I've nothing to say. I keep the house pretty fairly in order, and keep my garden weeded, and the gardeners never disturb the birds; but the cats eat them. I am taking up mineralogy again as a pacific and unexciting study; only I can't do the confounded mathematics of their new books. I am at work on some botany of weeds, too, and such like, and am better on the whole than I was two years ago. My mother is pretty well, too; sometimes I get her out to take a drive, and she enjoys it, but always has to be teased into going. Carlyle has got through the first calamity of rest, after Frederick, among his Scotch hills, and I hope will give us something worthier of him before he dies. Rossetti and the rest I never see now. They go their way and I

mine; so you see I've no news, but I'm always

Affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

Church's Cotopaxi is an interesting picture. He can draw clouds as few men can, though he does not know yet what painting means, and I suppose never will, but he has a great gift of his own. . . .

Denmark Hill, 11th *September*, 1865.

My dear Norton,—. . . I should have written to you some news of myself, though the war has put a gulph between all Americans and me in that I do not care to hear what they think, or tell them what I think, on any matter; and Lowell's work and Longfellow's is all now quite useless to me. But I shall send you an edition of my last lectures, however, with a new bit of preface in it, and anything else I may get done in the course of the winter, and I am always glad to hear of you. I am somewhat better in

health, and busy in several quiet ways, of which, if anything prosper in them, you will hear in their issue, and nobody need hear until then.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN.

DENMARK HILL, 10 *October*, 1865.

MY DEAR NORTON, — . . . I am quiet, and likely to be so for many a day at D. Hill, amusing myself as I may; it is a grand thing, and makes up for much, to be within reach of the B. Museum. I am cutting down a bush here and a tree (or what we call one in England) there, and making little fishponds and gutters and such like, and planting peach trees, for the blossom, and wildflowers, and anything that is bright and simple. And I am working at mythology and geology, and conchology, and chemistry, and what else there is of the infinite and hopeless unknown to be stumbled among pleasantly; and I hope to get various little bits of work printed this

Xmas, and to send you them. I will think over that plan of cheap edition, but I always hitherto have hated my own books ten years after I wrote them. I sat to Rossetti several times, and he made the horriblest face I ever saw of a human being. I will never let him touch it more. I have written to-day to Edward Jones, to ask if he 'll do one for me and one for you. *He* can. And this is all I can say to-day, and if I put off, there 's no knowing when I might write at all. So with affectionate regards to your mother and sisters,

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin.

Denmark Hill, 10th *January*, 1866.

My dear Norton, — I wrote you a letter of thanks for your book on Dante, some months ago. I fear you have not received it and you must think me worse than I am, but I 'm bad enough. I never shall be able to forgive any of you for the horror of this

past war — not but that I know you 'll all be the better of it. But I 've never cared to read a word of Lowell's or anybody on the other Atlantic's side, since — only I love you still, and wish you the best that may be for this year. Not that anything that *I* wish ever happens, so it 's no use.

I send you my last book, and with faithful regards to your mother and sisters am

ever your affectionate

J. RUSKIN.

DENMARK HILL, 11 *January*, 1866.

DEAR NORTON, — I got your letter yesterday evening, after posting one to you by the 5 o'clock post. I can only answer quickly to-day that I *have* written, this morning to Edward Jones, begging him to have me to sit instantly; and that I hope you 'll find something more of me in the little book of new lectures I have sent you.

But how can you expect a man living alone, and with everything gone cross to him, and

not in any way having joy, even of the feeblest sort, — but at the best only relief from pain, and that only when he is at work, — to show anything but a cramped shadow of the little there is in him? Turner is dead — all his works are perishing, and I can't see those that exist. Every thirteenth century cathedral in France, and every beautiful street in my favorite cities, has been destroyed. Chamouni is destroyed — Geneva — Lucerne — Zurich — Schaffhausen — Berne, — might just as well have been swallowed up by earthquakes as be what they are now. There are no inns, no human beings any more anywhere; nothing but endless galleries of rooms, and Automata in millions. — I can't travel. I have taken to stones and plants. They do very well for comfort; but dissecting a thistle or a bit of chalk is pinched work for me, instead of copying Tintoret or drawing Venice. I could get, and do get, some help out of Greek myths — but they are full of earth, and horror, in spite of their beauty.

Persephone is the sum of them, or worse than Persephone — Comus. Natural science ends in the definition which Owen gave me the other day, of a man, or any other high vertebrate, "a clothed sum of segments." And my dearest friends go rabid in America about blacks, and poor white Italy and Greece are left in a worse Hell than any volcano-mouth — unhelped. And you expect me to write myself smooth out, with no crumple.

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin.

Denmark Hill, 28 *January*, 1866.

Dear Norton, — The £50 have arrived safe. I don't tell Ned Jones the enormity of the sum, for it would make him nervous, and he would vow "he could n't do anything worth the fifth of it — and if you expected fifty pounds' worth out of him, it was no use his doing anything." So I go and sit, and he makes various sketches; some one is pretty sure to come out fairly, and

I 'll pick up two or three besides and some bits of what he calls waste paper, of old designs — and so will make out our money's worth at last, I hope. All that you say of expression is very nice and right. But it 's a wide world, and there 's a great deal in it, and one's head is but a poor little room to study in after all. One can't see far into anything.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

Have you read Swinburne's "Atalanta"? The grandest thing ever yet done by a youth — though he is a Demoniac youth. Whether ever he will be clothed and in his right mind, heaven only knows. His foam at the mouth is fine, meantime.

Denmark Hill, 27th *March*, 1866.

My dear Norton, — I have not yet answered your my birthday letter, and here is another, kind as always.

First, please be assured, as I think you

must have been without my telling you, that when I would not write to you during the American war, it was not because I loved you less, but because I could no otherwise than by silence express the intensity of my adverse feeling to the things you were countenancing — and causing; for of course the good men in America were the real cause and strength of the war. Now, it is past, I have put in my protest, and we are the same full friends as always, except only that I can't read American sentiment any more — in its popular form — and so can't sympathize with you in all things as before. . . .

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin.

The portrait has been a little checked, but is going on well. In about three weeks I am going to try to get as far as Venice, for change of thought. I want to see a Titian once more before I die, and I 'm not quite sure when that may not be (as if anybody was), yet, on

the whole, my health is better. I 've some work in hand which you will like, I think, also. Affectionate regards to your mother and sisters.

DENMARK HILL, 18 *August*, 1866.

DEAR NORTON, — I have been in hopes every day of announcing completion of drawing for you, but Edward works at it and gets angry with himself, and then gives in; he is not well, and has gone into the country for a week or two. I have not drawn your cheque. I 'll get him on if I can, as soon as he comes back.

I 've had rather a bad summer. I went abroad with an old friend, Lady Trevelyan and her husband. She died at Neuchatel. . . . I am not well myself, and do not care to write nothing but grumbles to you. I am working at botany and mineralogy, however, with some success.

My mother is pretty well, and I daresay if ever I get any strength again, I shall find

I 've learned something through all this darkness. Howbeit, I fancy Emerson's essay on Compensation must have been written when he was very comfortable. Forgive this line — I have put it off so long — and you can't write to me while I 'm swindling you out of your fifty pounds, without seeming to dun me for it.

I am drawing some slight things rather better than of old. That 's the only promising point at present.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

Denmark Hill, 28th *December*, 1866.

My dear Norton, — I have not written to you because I *did* hope to have sent you some account of the portrait, but both Jones and I have been ill, — *I* very seriously, as far as any chronic illness can be serious, — being variously tormented, down into the dust of death and near his gates, and no portrait seems finishable, for the present, so I have

cancelled your cheque, sending you back the enclosed torn bit to assure you thereof; and if either he or I (for I suspect I can draw myself better than anybody can) can do anything worth your having, you shall have it for nothing.

I am working at geology and botany, and hope to get something done in that direction, of a dry and dim nature, this next year. Which, as it will be my 7×7th, is likely, not merely for that reason — but for many, to bring many troubles to an end for me, one way or another.

My mother is wonderfully well, and I am in some sort better than for some time back. The doctors say there 's nothing the matter with me but what it is n't their business to deal with.

Did I tell you anything of my summer tour this year? I forget. Let me know how you are.

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin.

DENMARK HILL, 23rd *January*, 1867.

DEAR NORTON, — I have just got your New Year's letter (for which a thousand thanks and thoughts); but I am vexed because you seem never to have got mine, giving account of Burne Jones's breakdown with the portrait and enclosing a fragment of your fifty-pound cheque to show that it was destroyed; and promising, if ever I can draw again, to try and do you a sketch of myself. This letter was sent a good while ago; I forget how long, but you should certainly have had it before the end of the year, it seems to me. However, it is always late enough to hear of failures. I am painting birds, and shells, and the like, to amuse myself and keep from sulking, but I sulk much.

Yes, it is indeed time we should meet — but it will be to exchange glances and hearts — not thoughts — for I have no thoughts — I am so puzzled about everything that I 've

given up thinking altogether. It seems to me likely that I shall draw into a very stern, lonely life, if life at all, doing perhaps some small work of hand with what gift I have, peacefully, and in the next world — if there is any — I hope to begin a little better and get on farther. I want to send this by "return of post" and must close.

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin.

My mother's love. She is well, but her sight is failing fast now. She may revive a little in spring: — perhaps may only last long enough to let her see my father's tomb. I have made it quite simple, with a granite slab on the top — so[1] — supported by a pure and delicate moulding from my favorite tomb of Ilaria di Caretto, at Lucca (a slender green serpentine shaft at each corner) and on the granite slab, — this,

[1] Here was a slight drawing.

Here rests
From Day's well-sustained burden,
JOHN JAMES RUSKIN.
Born in Edinburgh, May 10th, 1785,
He died in his home in London March 3rd, 1864.

He was an entirely honest Merchant
And his memory
Is, to all who keep it,
Dear, and helpful.

His son,
Whom he loved to the uttermost,
And taught to speak truth,
Says this of him.

DENMARK HILL, 12th *March*, 1867.

DEAR NORTON, — I have drawn your fifty pounds this time, and will render you, I trust, better account of it. I have not been able to attend to anything lately, having been in all kinds of bitter, doubtful, useless, wretchedness of pain, of which it is no use to write. I think this 7×7th year may put some close to it, one way or another. I hardly know how far it is hurting me — perhaps I make more fuss about pain than other men, because I can't understand how people can

give it me — and it gives me a horror of human creatures; I don't in the least see how it can come right any way, but it must end.

The drawing by Jones will be, I hope, easily gettable; the "Liber Studiorum" is more difficult, — impossible, I might say, — but perhaps the prices which had become utterly wild and monstrous may lower a little in these bad times of trade.

The far-spread calamity caused by these villainous speculators meets me at every turn; friend after friend is affected by it, directly or indirectly, but it does not seem yet to lower art prices, which is the only good it could do me.

I've been painting a little, and writing some letters on politics, but otherwise I'm all but dead — and why should I go on whining about it to you?

Ever, with sincere remembrances to your mother and sisters,

most affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

AMBLESIDE, 8 *August*, 1867.

MY DEAR NORTON, — I was *very* glad of your letter. . . . I want to say a word about the Turners,[1] which I am very thankful for all your kind thoughts about — but indeed the only "kindness" of mine is in putting you, as it were ten years back, on fair terms of purchase. I wish I *had* the pleasure of giving; all my art treasures are now useless to *me*, except for reference; the whole subject of art is so painful to me, and the history of Turner and all my own lost opportunities of saving his work, are a perpetual torment to me, if I begin thinking of them.

But this was what I wanted to say: Your American friends, even those who know most of art, may be much disappointed with the "Liber Studiorum," for the nobleness of those designs is not so much in what *is* done, as in what is *not* done in them. Any tyro,

[1] Some plates from the *Liber Studiorum*, and some pencil drawings.

looking at them first, would say, Why, *I* can do trees better than that — figures better — rocks better — everything better. "Yes — and the daguerreotype — similarly — better than *you*," is the answer, first; but the final answer — the showing how every touch in these plates is related to every other, and has no permission of withdrawn, monastic virtue, but is only good in its connection with the rest, and in that connection *infinitely* and inimitably good; — and the showing how each of the designs is connected by all manner of strange intellectual chords and nerves with the pathos and history of this old English country of ours; and on the other side, with the history of European mind from earliest mythology down to modern rationalism and *ir*-rationalism — all *this* showing — which was what I meant to try for in my closing work — I felt, long before that closing, to be impossible; and the mystery of it all — the God's making of the great mind, and the

martyrdom of it, and the uselessness of it all forever, as far as human eyes can see or thoughts travel. All these things it is of no use talking about.

I am here among the lakes resting, and trying to recover some tone of body. I entirely deny having lost tone of mind (in spite of all pain) yet. And yesterday I walked up Helvellyn, and the day before up Skiddaw (and walked twelve miles besides the hill work yesterday) — both of them 3000 feet of lift — so I think there may be some life in the old dog yet. . . .

All you say of religion is true and right, but the deadly question with me is — What next? or if anything is next? so that I 've no help, but rather increase of wonder and horror from that.

One word more about Turner. You see every great man's work (*his* pre-eminently) is a *digestion* of nature, which makes glorious HUMAN FLESH of it. All my first work in "Modern Painters" was to show that one

must have *nature* to *digest* — not chalk and water for milk. . . .

Ever lovingly yours,

J. Ruskin.

20th *November*, 1867.

Dear Norton, — If I could have replied with any certainty to your questions about the Turners, I should have done so long ago; but I have had a great deal more of various doubt and suffering to go through, of which I can at present say nothing, except only this, that while I can still do what my hand finds to do, I am incapable of any right speaking or feeling, and am as numb as if every nerve in me had been cut; but I am putting my old work together, that had been wasted, and drawing a little — not ill, and variously getting myself together, what is left of me.

In the meantime your letters have given to me continual pleasure. . . . Also, your various presents. Longfellow's excellent

"Dante;" and your own "Vita Nuova," with all their good help to me, came to hand, one by one — they are all in my special own shelf of bookcase, and will take me back again to long ceased Dante studies, though in returning to him, the terrible "What *do* you mean, or believe of all this?" fronts me with appalling strangeness. Longfellow's translation is excellent and most helpful. The "Vita Nuova" falls in much with my own mind — but, when death or life depends on such things, suppose it should be *morte nuova* day by day? I am also working at Greek myths and art, and the like, and hope to give you some account of myself one day, and of my time.

Of the Turners I can tell you nothing, except that I wholly concur in your judgment of their relative merits, and that the subjects you enquire about are, I think, all on the Rhine, but none of them absolutely known to me. I shall try and find one or

two more for you, and give you some better account of them.

I am thankful that you believe such things can be of service in America. My own impression is that they are useless, everywhere — but better times may come.

I wish you would come here once again — I *need* you now. I only enjoyed you before.

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin.

III

1868–1873

III

1868–1873

In the summer of 1868, I again went to Europe with my family. During a week or two which we passed in London Ruskin was with us frequently, and we were more than once at Denmark Hill.

At his own home he was charming in his cordial, sympathetic eagerness to give pleasure. He had a boyish alacrity in bringing out his treasures, whatever they might be, — manuscripts, drawings, precious stones, — and he displayed them with such genuine pleasure in the appreciation of them by his guests as to make their enjoyment complete. I see him now on his knees before a chair on which he had set up a Turner drawing, while we stood around listening to his words concerning it, now running to fetch another drawing from his chamber, now mounted on a chair holding a candle to show a picture on the wall. His mother still ruled the house from her upstairs room, and still kept close

oversight over the proceedings of her dependents, of whom her son was the chief. Denmark Hill outwardly was still one of the pleasant old-fashioned suburban homes, but within there never was another like it.

For three months in the late summer and autumn we were established at Keston, a little village remote from the railway, some thirteen or fourteen miles from London, in a pleasant part of the chalk region of Kent. Down, the home of Mr. Darwin, was perhaps a mile away, near enough for pleasant neighborly relations. Ruskin did everything to make our stay in the country pleasant, coming over to see us, often writing, and sending books, or water-color drawings by Turner, himself, and others, to light up the somewhat dull rooms of the little old Rectory in which we were living; sending also gifts to my little children, and in every way manifesting a friendly thoughtfulness for our pleasure and comfort.

He had changed much since I last saw him. The bitter experiences and many troubles of the years which had passed had told heavily upon him. He had become, as I

gradually noted, mentally more restless and unsettled, and though often gay and always keen in his enjoyment of whatever charm the passing moment might offer, he no longer possessed even the moderate happiness and the imperfect peace such as life under ordinary circumstances may afford even to a nature so susceptible and so undisciplined as his. The contrast between his sweet and modest bearing and his considerate regard for the feelings of others in personal intercourse, and the frequent arrogance of expression in his writings, was always striking; but the trait which now seemed to me more evident and more controlling than in former years was that of which he has said in writing of his childhood,[1] "Another character of my perceptions, I find curiously steady — that I was interested by things near me or at least clearly visible and present. I suppose this is so with children generally, but it remained — and remains — a part of my grown-up temper." I said to him one day that when he was looking at a sunset he was altogether forgetful of the sunrise. "Yes," he replied,

[1] *Præterita*, i. ch. vi.

" but to-morrow morning I shall care only for the sunrise." His mind was of "a temper so interwoven," to use his own words again, so open to strong impressions from widely different objects, that there was an extraordinary variety in his interests, both personal and intellectual, and little consecutiveness in his occupations.

Early in September Ruskin went to Abbeville, in Normandy, an interesting old town, for the sake of making drawings of St. Wulfram, one of the finest late constructions in the late flamboyant Gothic style, which was about to undergo restoration. I passed the first days of October with him there. He spent most of the day in drawing; studying the church from various points, and portraying the elaborate and fanciful detail of its architecture, with the mastery of genius and accomplished skill. Toward sunset and in the early twilight of the autumnal afternoons we had long walks over the low hills which lie near the town. We went thence for a day or two to Paris, where we had the good fortune to find Longfellow and his admirable brother-in-law, Tom Appleton. Neither of

them had previously met Ruskin. There could not be a pleasanter dinner than that which we had one evening at Meurice's. Ruskin, Longfellow, and Appleton were each at his respectively unsurpassed best, and when late at night the little company broke up, its members parted from each other as if all had been old friends.

A day or two after my return to England Ruskin wrote to me from Abbeville, October 9: "It is cold, and I am spoiled a little by Paris and Americans. But the light is lovely, and I feel well up to my work (for me)."

DENMARK HILL, *July* 20th, 1868.

MY DEAREST NORTON, — I am very deeply glad that you are with us again. I cannot write to you — cannot think of you rightly — when you are so far away. I will be here at any time for you, but the sooner you come the better, as exhibitions are fast closing.

My mother, confined now unhappily to the *level* of her room, requires both quiet and space in that story of the house, and in many ways this renders it impossible for me to

make arrangements that would be comfortable in receiving friends. I can always make up a bed for you, but could not make it at all right for Mrs. Norton also; you will see, when you come, how it is so; come soon, please — but yet (except for exhibitions) not in any haste interfering with your comfort. I *must* be here for three or four weeks longer at all events.

Ever your affectionate

JOHN RUSKIN.

My true regards to all with you.

DENMARK HILL, 22nd *August*, 1868.

MY DEAR CHARLES,—Five of the little pebbles were sent yesterday to be polished, and will be sent, or brought to you, next week; if the children are told on "Saturday" next, they can't be disappointed. I have looked out to-day a few fossils of the chalk — flints and the like — of which I know nothing, though I have them as illustrations of

certain methods of mineralization. But they will show you what kind of things are now under your feet, and in the roadside heaps of stones; and the first time Darwin takes them in his hand they will become *Prim*-Stones to you (I am glad to escape writing the other word after "Prim"), and *Stones*-Lips, instead of Cows. Not that they're worth his looking at, otherwise than as the least things have been. (They are worth carriage to America, however, as you have n't chalk there.) But the little group of shattered vertebræ in the square piece of chalk may have belonged to some beast of character and promise. When is he going to write — ask him — the "Retrogression" of Species — or the Origin of Nothing? I am far down on my way into a flint-sponge. Note the little chalcedony casts of spiculæ in the sea-urchins (wrapt up more carefully than the rest).

Next, as Mrs. Norton remembered that bird of Hunt's, I thought she might like to have one a little like it, which would other-

wise only be put away just now, and I 've sent it, and a shell and bit of stone of my own which I 'm rather proud of (I want Darwin to see the shell — only don't say I did, please). I can do much better, but it looked shelly and nice, and I left it. . . .

Ever your affectionate

J. RUSKIN.

HOTEL DE FRANCE, ABBEVILLE,
31 *August*, 1868.

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — Just send me the merest line here to say how you all are. I am settled now to my work, and am the better for my rest. When it is a little more forward, I shall try to persuade you to spend a couple of days with me here, as you will never, after this autumn, see such a piece of late Gothic as the front of St. Wulfram in its original state, more; it is the last I know left untouched, and it is to be "restored" in the spring. It is not good, but wonderful, and worth setting sight on before its death, and

there are other things I shall have found out to show you. It is only six hours from that pretty English home of yours.

I daresay you have been writing something to me; but my letters could not be sent on, as I did not know where I should be. So now send me just a word, for it is dull here, somewhat, among the grey stones and ghastliness of Catholicism in decadence.

Love to all with you.

Ever your affectionate

J. RUSKIN.

ABBEVILLE, 11th *September*, 1868.

MY DEAREST CHARLES,—. . . Come whenever it is most convenient to you; I shall have my work in a more comfortable state in about a week's time than it is now, but come at your own time. . . .

I have often thought of setting down some notes of my life, but I know not how. I should have to accuse my own folly bitterly; but not less, as far as I can judge, that of

the fondest, faithfullest, most devoted, most mistaken parents that ever child was blest with, or ruined by. For myself, I could speak of my follies and my sins; I could not speak of my good. If I did, people would know the one was true; few would believe the other. Many of my own thoughts for better things I have forgotten; I cannot judge myself — I can only despise and pity. In my good nature, I have no merit — but much weakness and folly. In my genius I am curiously imperfect and broken. The best and strongest part of it could not be explained. And the greatest part of my life — as Life (and not merely as an investigating or observant energy) has been . . . a series of delights which are gone forever, and of griefs which remain forever; and my one necessity of strength or of being is to turn away my thoughts from what they refuse to forget. Some day, but not now, I will set down a few things, but the more you understand, the less you will care for

me. I am dishonest enough to want you to take me for what I am to you, by your own feeling — not for what I am in the hollowness of me. I bought a cane of palm-tree a week ago; it was a delightful cane to me, but it has come untwisted; it is all hollow inside. It is not the poor cane's fault; it would let me lean upon it — if it could. . . .

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin.

Abbeville, 22nd *September*, 1868.

My dearest Charles, — . . . The time you have named will do excellently for me — and it is worth your while to come, for I can show you as much of the principles of declining French architecture here, and explain to you more of my own mistakes and delights in the "Seven Lamps" epoch, than I could in any other place in the world. I shall let you go on by yourself to Chartres; but I want to arrange to meet you at Paris on your return (or at Rouen, and so back

here through Paris) that we may have a talk in the Louvre together and see the Hours of St. Louis together. I 've never seen it, and I know it is the only 13th century MS. in the world which can match the one you have two leaves of.

Love to you all.

Ever your affectionate

J. RUSKIN.

I 've a great deal to *say*, but I can't write.

ABBEVILLE, Thursday evening [18 *October*, 1868].

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — I have been walking along the brow of the hill opposite that on which we walked on that dark evening — on the other side of the valley, and feeling very dull without you. . . .

I was glad that I stopped at Amiens. Fearfully destroyed — it is still majestic and pure, and in its interior, far beyond what I remembered. I have much gained in feeling and judgment lately.

I think you must come *there* — not here —

in November. Tell me how the little doll[1] with the shoulder straps is liked.

Ever your affectionate

J. R.

ABBEVILLE, Monday [21 *October*, 1868].

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — I was struck by a wearisome little feverish cold on the Saturday after I left you, which has kept me from writing even to thank you for the lovely message from Longfellow, and from working since; and now I must come home because of the Employment committee, and I 'm a little sad at leaving — but that is my destiny — plans unaccomplished, of every kind, in little and great things; I can't finish a word properly. If you could dine and sleep at Denmark Hill either on Saturday or Sunday (or both) . . . we could talk over Employment of Roughs (much either of us know about those Antipodes of ours). I am so vexed not to be able to go to Paris again

[1] Sent to one of my children.

to call on Mr. Longfellow, and the vexing myself variously keeps the cold upon me; but I am beating it gradually.

Tuesday's post (to-morrow's) will still find me here. After that write home. I have got the negatives of all the best of those photos. Thanks for letter about government. Love to you all.

Ever your affectionate

J. RUSKIN.

The Employment Committee referred to in the preceding letter was a voluntary organization of a number of eminent men, formed for the purpose of devising means for providing work for the vast number of unemployed or irregularly employed men and women in London, and for preventing the increase of their ranks. Since 1860, when his four essays on some of the problems and principles of Political Economy had been printed in "Fraser's Magazine" (afterwards reprinted under the title of "Unto this Last"), Ruskin had thought and published much on the questions with which the Employment Com-

mittee undertook to deal, and this year he published "Notes on the General Principles of Employment for the Destitute and Criminal Classes."

TO MRS. C. E. NORTON.

[*October*, 1868.]

My dear Susan, — I can't come to-day after all. Committee adjourned. Fight confused between the men who consider the poor a nuisance to be repressed, and those who consider them a material to be worked up. Twelve o'clock to-day, meeting. I mean to define the two parties if I can get the last into mass. Sir W. Crofton is to be there. I mean to propose, and carry if I can, the resolution on the opposite side of this; you can make it out — I can't copy it. Everybody sends me their opinions privately; I pick out what I want and prepare it as Mr. So and So's, patting it hard on the bacl but it 's hard work.

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin.

[*Resolution.*]

That this society believes that no ultimate good will be effected by any law which is based on the separation of the poor from other classes of society as objects of a scornful charity or recipients of unearned relief; but that every increasing social evil may be attacked at its foundation by the giving of useful employment at fixed rates of remuneration to all who are capable of work, and by the training to such useful employments of those who are now capable of them, under such systems of discipline as may tend at once to the encouragement of manly and honourable principles, and the direct repression of crime.

(No thick note paper in drawer!)

TO MRS. C. E. NORTON.

DENMARK HILL, Saturday.

MY DEAR SUSAN, — . . . I am tired to-day, for I had two committees yesterday — one *sub;* one general — and hard fighting and

harder flattering, in both. In the sub three only of the five members came, including me; three were a quorum, and I was one against two — only able to hold my own by fencing for two hours. I got harm averted, and we parted like the three friends of the lake of Uri.

In the general committee I had hard straight fighting with an old stick of a Social Science man — Mr. Hill — for another two hours, but with the majority of the committee helping me, however, or at least backing me. The hard part of the fighting was in holding my tongue and watching for breaks in squares. At last I got him into a bad temper. Archbishop Manning smoothed him down, and he got worse, and at last, to my intense delight, he threatened the Committee with the penalty of his retirement from their body if they did n't pass his motion. Whereupon, we managed to get the Archbishop to prepare an amendment (nobody else seemed inclined to venture in face of the penalty)

which I seconded, and it was carried at once. It took another two hours (as I said) — two and a half, nearly — to get this one victory (the old gentleman held his own by talking against time for a long while), and everything else had to be adjourned till Tuesday; but they appointed a sub-committee, — Archb. Manning, Sir W. Crofton, Mr. Fuller, *me* (and somebody else — I think, but am not sure), with an excellent whip in Mr. Jolly, the Independent Clergyman (I like him so much, really) — and now I think we shall get on.

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin.

TO MRS. C. E. NORTON.

Denmark Hill, Friday.

My dear Susan, — . . . Yes, I wish I could have talked over this business with somebody — but not in the immediate push of it. Getting things through Committee — which is like threading many needles not in a

line (and some restive) with a thread fluffy at the end — is bad enough; when one has a thing to do one's self, one must do it. I 've never found two heads better than one, unless neither could be much worse for being alone, or unless the weakest was uppermost. I accept the adage under quite a different — I hope to you acceptable — reading: "Two *hearts* are better than one." We poor bachelors, whose workaday ones are so early cracked into chequers that the water of life runs out through them — and the chimes all ring dead — should be very glad if we had a spare one handy.

TO MRS. C. E. NORTON.

DENMARK HILL, *November* 5 [1868].

MY DEAR SUSAN, — . . . I should have been over to-day, but have received a note from a poor little sick girl — who is kept in London by spine complaint, very painful, and wants to see me, and trusts me to come — so I can't fail her. She is a Roman Catholic of

the old Scotch Kerr race; her brother, once (and very young) captain of a ship of the line, has become a monk; and I had a walk with the only sister she has *out* of convent, up Rhymer's glen at Melrose last year, which was the likest thing to a scene in the beginning of a Waverley novel that ever I had fortune of any part in — the girl being truly one of Walter Scott's women, as opposed to the heroines of modern romance. In this sick one the disease has touched the brain, and she is wildly gentle, inconsistent, restless, wonderstricken — like a person half changed into a child — with great joy and peace in her religion. It 's a wild, ungentle world, with its broken wrecks of spirits — and of Fates.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

We were detained late in the country. On the 20th November, Ruskin wrote: "I will come to-morrow and shall have very great

pleasure in meeting Mr. Darwin." They had never before met, and each was interested to see the other. The contrast between them was complete, and each in his own way was unique and delightful. Ruskin's gracious courtesy was matched by Darwin's charming and genial simplicity. Ruskin was full of questions which interested the elder naturalist by the keenness of observation and the variety of scientific attainment which they indicated, and their animated talk afforded striking illustration of the many sympathies that underlay the divergence of their points of view, and of their methods of thought. The next morning Darwin rode over on horseback to say a pleasant word about Ruskin, and two days afterward Ruskin wrote, "Mr. Darwin was delightful."

Soon after this we left Keston to spend the winter in London, and, during the next two or three months, not many days passed without a note or a visit from Ruskin, or some other evidence of his thoughtful kindness. He adorned our drawing-room with water-colors by Turner or himself, ten or twelve of them at a time; he brought precious manuscripts

and books for me, and little gifts for my children. To give pleasure was his delight.

DENMARK HILL, *February*, 1869.

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — The enclosed is not a Washington autograph, but I think you will like to have it, as evidently the first sketch of the Moral Theory of his work by the great author of "Modern Painters." . . .

Ever your affectionate

J. R.

The Guide came all right — it is so very useful.

The inclosures were the following letter and verses — the letter written in pencil, the verses printed neatly in ink.

May, 1827.

MY DEAR PAPA, — I have missed you very much especially on sunday for though I do miss you on the evenings yet I miss you more on sunday mamma is always thinking

of you for when she fills miss deprey's cup she only puts in the milk and sugar and leaves the rest to miss depreey. I have changed very much in my lessons for while mary was with me I said them very ill every day but now I almost say them very well every day. we are perhaps going to make a balloon to-day perhaps not for a good while. just as I was thinking what to say to you, I turned by chance to your picture, and it came into my mind now what can I say to give pleasure to that papa. the weather is at present very beautiful, though cold. I have nothing more to say to you dear papa

Your affectionate son,

JOHN RUSKIN

Mamma says that I may tell you I have been a very good boy while you have been away.

WALES

That rock with waving willows on its side
That hill with beauteous forests on its top

That stream that with its rippling waves doth glide
And oh what beauties has that mountain got
That rock stands high against the sky
Those trees stand firm upon the rock
and seem as if they all did lock
Into each other; tall they stand
Towering above the whitened land

SPRING

What beauties spring thou hast the waving lilac
and the stiff tall peach with roselike flowers
with yellow chorchorus and with nectarine blossom
some with grace wave and some though tall are stiff
waving is lilac so is yellow chorchorus
waving is cherry blossom though not so graceful
as the spiry lilac and the hyacinth

stiff is the pear and nectarine with the
peach
and apricot all these are stiff but in return
their flowers are beautiful. so are birds and
beasts
as well as flowers some are wild and cruel
such are the tiger, panther, lynx and ounce
so also in return these animals
are pretty in the other sort
some dogs are ugly but conceal within
some good intentions good ideas good
thoughts.
but spring, there is one tree that thou bring'st
forth
that is more beautiful than all the others
this is the apple blossom o how sweet
is that fine tree and so I end.

DENMARK HILL, *April* 12, 1869.

DEAREST CHARLES, — I must stay six days longer[1] — till Monday fortnight, this work

[1] He was about setting out for Italy, with intent to make a long stay at Verona.

has grown under my hands so. It is to be called the "Queen of the Air," and divided into three sections:—

1

Athena in the Heavens

2

Athena in the Earth

3

Athena in the Heart

That is to say, of course, the spirit in the winds, the spirit in the potter's clay, and in the Invention of Arts; and I'm going to get what I mainly mean about "*didactic* Art" said unmistakably in the last section, against the rascally "immoral Gift" set of people on the one side.

I've sent you three uncorrected sheets about species; please look at them and tell me what you think the scientific people will say. . . .

Ever yours,

J. R.

DENMARK HILL, S. E., *April* 13, '69.

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — It will indeed be a help of the very highest value to me if you can glance through the proof in their present state — marking anything that you chance to notice wrong or mendable. Here is the first section; there 's a good deal added at the end which is at least interesting to me myself — I think Mars' opinion of Minerva at page 56 is great fun. I have never thanked Susan yet for my lovely Japan cup. The children were so happy with her and you last night.

I fear I cannot afford the Rievaulx — I know it, and wholly agree with your estimate of it. But I *must* have Nemi and Terni. They are Athena *pure;* and there are six more Hakewells[1] in the next sale, and a hope of a *Yorkshire* or two beside. And the Rievaulx will bring — Heaven knows what.

[1] "Hakewells" means drawings by Turner for Hakewell's Italy, — very beautiful, — which with the other drawings named were to be sold at Christie's.

But of all the England drawings, except Carnarvon, it is perhaps the loveliest.

Ever your loving

J. R.

The winter had not gone well with Ruskin. His heart had been restless, and troubled. The condition of his mother was a source of constant anxiety to him. He had overworked himself in spite of his conviction, of which he had recently written to me, that "one never quite recovers from overwork," and at length he got into such a worried and nervously overstrained condition, that he broke away from home, regardless of engagements and of half-completed matters of important concern. He left me in charge of many of these matters, tossing them pall-mall into my hands, with full authority, but with scanty specific direction.

April 27, 1869.

DEAREST CHARLES, — I have referred printers and everybody to you. My old friend Mr. Harrison may be a little troublesome, but bear with him, for he is very good,

and has seen all my large books through press; I 'll soon write from abroad.

Meantime, please come out to Denmark Hill. I 've addressed the bookcase key to you — on my right as I sit in study.

Open this, and in the two upper drawers of it you 'll find St. Louis and my other favorite manuscripts. I have not had time to put them up, and you may like to look at them. Please take them away at your leisure, and leave them at the British Museum with Mr. Edward A. Bond, sealed up and addressed to me, or to Charles Norton, Esq., so that you could get them at once, if anything happened to me.

Ever your loving

J. R.

HOTEL MEURICE, 28 *April*, 1869.

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — It makes me feel as if you were always coming in at the door, . . . to be here again. We had a lovely day yesterday, and leave by 11 train for Dijon

to-day; but I shall stop at Vevay till you write to me with anything you have to say. Please look over the part of preface already written (I 've still to add a word or two), and write me a title-page accordingly, . . . i. e. a title to go with all the series, and with the "Queen of the Air" subordinate.

Love to you all.

Ever your affectionate

J. R.

I 'll write better to-morrow.

VERONA, ALBERGO DUE TORRI, 13th *June.*

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — That is very delightful, your being at Vevay. I knew we should see each other again. I should have returned by the Simplon at any rate, for I have a great and strong plan about the valley of the Rhone. It is very fortunate for me to have come to look up into it. But as for time of stay, it depends on my mother and my work here — it cannot be long, at the best, but we 'll have a talk. I can't write much

to-day. As for Will and Book, I have been able to do nothing but my work here. I have not even looked at the draught of the Will, and did n't get it till too late to answer to London. The only excuse I made to myself for giving you the burden of seeing that book out, was that *no questions* might come to me — I intended *you* to decide.

The moment I found questions sent I wrote home in a great passion, " Publish, *anyhow*." After that, they sent to ask me if I could n't find a better word for " manifest," and nearly drove me crazy with the intense desire to knock them all down with the types.

What they 're about now I have n't the slightest idea. What I 'm about, I can't tell you to-day. The horror of living among these foul Italian wretches and seeing them behave exactly like dogs and flies among the tombs and churches of their fathers, is more than I can bear, with any power of rational speech left — about anything. But I am doing good work, and I 'm very thankful you are at

Vevay. Longfellow is in search of you on the Rhine. We had an afternoon here. He was so nice. I was drawing in the Piazza de Signori when he and his youngest daughter came up and stood beside, looking on.

Don't you think that some people would have liked a photograph of the old square, with those figures on it? Antwerp spire *is* very fine; but its details are all bad. It is of the last period of Gothic decline, but a noble piece of proportion and mass.

I did not forget you at Neuchatel. But they had built a modern church at the castle — and made me sick — and I would n't have had you go there. Love to you all.

Ever your affectionate

J. R.

VERONA, 14th *June*, 1869.

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — . . . Have you studied the architectural Developments of Montreux, and the quarry opened in the little glade behind the church, which was *one*

of the spots that were unique in Europe (Q. also in America?). The walks on the hill above Montreux when you get as high as the pines are very lovely. The narcissi are all over, I suppose?

I can't tell you anything about my work, — there 's too much in hand. It is chiefly drawing, however; but I can do little of that in the way I try, and must try, to do it.

Everything is a dreadful Problem to me now; of living things, from the lizards, and everything worse and less than they (including those Americans I met the other day), up to Can Grande — and of dead, everything that *is* dead, irrevocably, how much!

You know I 'm going to redeem that Valley of the Rhone. It 's too bad, and can't be endured any longer. I 'm going to get civil to the Alpine Club, and show them how to be a club indeed — Hercules 's against Hydra. If they won't attend to me, I 'll do *one* hillside myself. There shall not one drop of water go down to the Rhone from my hill-

side, unless I choose — and when it does, it shall water pretty things all the way down. And before I die I hope to see a rampart across every lateral valley holding a pure quiet lake full of fish, capable of six feet rise at any moment over as much surface as will take the meltings of the glaciers above it for a month. And if I don't master the Rhone that way, they shall shut me up in Chillon for the rest of my days if they like.

I'm not mad; I've had this in my mind for many years, ever since I wrote the "Mountain Gloom" chapters; and I planned it all the way from Vevay over the Simplon this last year. How far people will do it, I know not, but I know it can be done.

I am up always at ¼ before 5, and at work at 6, as I used to be in 1845. But my hand gets shaky by 12 o'clock — like this — and you can't read more of it than this in a day, I'm sure.

Ever your affectionate

J. R.

VERONA, 16th *June*, 1869.

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — I have perhaps alarmed you by the apparent wildness and weakness of the two letters I have sent you. But I am neither wild nor weak, in comparison with what I have been in former days: and in thinking of me, you must always remember that it is impossible for you at all to conceive the state of mind of a person who has undergone as much pain as I have. I trace this incapability continually — in all your thoughts and words about me. Chiefly, in your thinking it possible (or right, if it *were*) for me to write dispassionately.

But in many other little ways. However, this is to assure you that I can still write tolerably straight, and add up (a few) figures, and reword the matters I have in brain and hand. And I have many serious ones just now; the knittings together of former purposes, with present anger and sorrow. Of which — in due time. Ever your loving friend,

JOHN RUSKIN.

VERONA, 21st *June*, '69.

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — Do you recollect that line of Horace's about Ulysses. "Adversis rerum immersabilis undis"? I do not know any sentence in any book that has so often helped me as that, but there is so strange a relation between it and the end of Ulysses in Dante. I recollect no evidence of Dante's knowing Horace at all: and it is so very strange to me that he has precisely contradicted Horace, in his mysterious death, "Infin che il mar fu sopra noi richiuso." It is the most melancholy piece in all Dante — that — to me.

I wish I could give you, for an instant, my sense of sailing on lonely sea, and your writing to me from far away about things so very practical and important — on the shore. Which, of course, I ought to care for, and to leave all properly arranged — fin che il mar sia sopra me richiuso. But I don't care about them. Or, take the comic side of it; Jonathan Oldbuck leaves Lovel, who is sensible and practical, to bring out his essay on the

Prætorium. Lovel does n't bring it out, and writes its titlepage calling it "an attempt at identification of the Kaim of Kinprunes, with the landing place of Agricola" and keeps teasing Jonathan to write his Will! . . .

24th *June.*

And, indeed, if I were to die now, the life would have been such a wreck that you could n't even make anything of the drift wood. It really is more important and practical for me to try before I die to lead two or three people to think "whether there be any Holy Ghost," than even to make sure that you have my watch and seals to play with — though I *should* like you to have them. Only I 'm not sure after all whether it is really me, or an ideal of me in your head, that you love. I don't believe anybody loves *me*, except my mother and poor little Joan.[1]

. . . I really *am* getting practical. Last night — full moon — the metal cross on the tomb

[1] His cousin Miss Agnew, now Mrs. Arthur Severn.

summit, which I have named in the "Stones of Venice" as "chief of all the monuments of a land of mourning,"[1] reflected the moonlight as it rose against the twilight, and looked like a cross of real pale fire — for the last time I believe from the old roof, for they take it off to-day, or to-morrow, to "restore it." Well, in old times, I should have thought that very pretty; whereas now I reflected that with four tallow candles stuck on the crossends I could produce a much brighter effect. And I 'm thinking of writing Hamlet's soliloquy into Norton-&-Millesque. "The

[1] The exact words in the *Stones of Venice* (vol. i. ch. 11, *ad fin.*) are: "this pure and lovely monument, my most beloved throughout all the length and breadth of Italy; chief, as I think, among all the sepulchral marbles of a land of mourning." They are the close of a description of (these are Ruskin's words) "as far as I know or am able to judge the most perfect Gothic sepulchral monument in the world . . . the nameless tomb standing over the small cemetery gate of the Church of St. Anastasia at Verona." No one will differ widely from Ruskin in his estimate of the beauty and impressiveness of this tomb, who has become familiar with the simplicity and dignity of its design, and the exquisite refinement of its decoration. It is a poem addressed to the eye.

question which under these circumstances must present itself to the intelligent mind, is whether to exist, or not to exist," etc. . . .

Don't send me any letters that will require any sort of putting up with or patience, because I have n't got any. Only this I 'll say — I 've suffered so fearfully from *Reticences* all my life that I think sheer blurting out of all in one's head is better than silence. . . .

By the way, Charles, when I 'm dead, do you mean to publish my sketches entitled "An attempt to draw the cathedral of Verona," etc., etc., because that would be quite true; but remember, one does n't "attempt" to interpret an inscription.[1] One either does it right or wrong; it is either a translation or a mistake. Of course, there are mistakes in all interpretation, but the gist of them is either a thing done or undone; it is not an attempt, except in the process of it.

[1] This sentence must have reference to some ill-judged suggestion of mine which I have quite forgotten, in regard to the title of his book which now stands in full as *The Queen of the Air: being a Study of the Greek Myths of Cloud and Storm.*

This Italy is such a lovely place to study liberty in! There are the vilest wretches of ape-faced children riding on my griffins [1] all day long, or throwing stones at the carvings — that ever were left to find the broad way to Hades without so much as a blinker, let alone a bridle. Can't write any more to-day.

Ever your loving,

J. R.

VERONA, 11th *July*, 1869.

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — I am glad the heat has come, for your sake and the vines', though on this side of the Alps there has been no cold, though no settled weather. The heat does not hurt me — it is always cool in the churches — and I have not done half the things I want yet, nor shall I, but must stay as long as I can and do all I can; they are destroying so fast, and so

[1] The griffins of the porch of the cathedral of Verona; concerning which see *Modern Painters*, iii. 106, where there is an engraving from Ruskin's fine drawing of one of them.

vilely, not merely taking away the old, but putting up new, which destroys all round. They have pulled down the remains of Theodoric's palace on the hill (there being no spot of Italian ground on which they could build a barrack but that) and they have built a barrack about the size of the Vatican, which, as Murray's guide complacently and reverently remarks, "forms a principal object in all the views of Verona." I am in no humour for talk — nor for rest — except sleep, of which I get all I can.

Why do you call Byron insincere? I should call his fault "incontinence of emotion." I call him one of the sincerest, though one of the vainest, of men; there is not a line he has written which does not seem to me as true as his shame for his clubfoot. He dresses his thoughts, — so does Pope, so Virgil, — but that is a fault, *if* a fault, of manner; it is not dishonest. And the more I know, whether of scenery or history, the truer I find him, *through* his manner. He is only

half educated, like Turner, and is half a cockney, and wholly a sensualist, and a very different sort of person from a practical and thorough gentleman like Joinville. But he is not insincere — and he cared for Greece, and could understand all nobleness. If he were only at Venice now, I think we should have got on with each other. It is very wonderful to me to be either in Venice, or here. Such a Dead World — of other people's lives and one's own.

Write, care of Rawdon Brown, Esq.,
Casa della Vida,
Venezia.

Love to you all. Ever your affectionate
J. RUSKIN.

VERONA, 9th *August*, '69.

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — . . . Several things have concurred lately in furthering my preparation for the plan I told you of about the Valais. To-day in coming from Venice I met an engineer who is negotiating a loan

of four millions of francs for an aqueduct to Venice, and had various talks with a Venetian merchant about the lagunes just before. Of course, the thing to be done is to catch and use and guide the rain, when first Heaven sends it. For 1200 years, the Venetians have been fighting vainly with the Brenta and its slime. Every wave of it is just so much gold, running idly into the sea, and dragging the ruin of kingdoms down with it. Catch it when it first falls, and the arid north side of the Alps would be one garden, up to 7000 feet above the plain, and the waters clear and lovely in what portion of them was allowed to go down to the plain for its cultivation. Not a drop should be allowed to find its way into the sea from Lombardy, except as much as would make the Po navigable as far at least as Pavia, or, better, Casale; and the minor rivers constant with clear water in one fifth of their present widths of bed. . . .

Omar is very deep and lovely. But the Uni-

verse is not a shadow show, nor a game, but a battle of weary wounds and useless cries, and *I* am now in the temper that Omar would have been in, if somebody always stood by him to put mud into his wine, or break his amphora. You don't quite yet understand the humour of thirsty souls, who have seen their last amphora broken — and "del suo vino farsi in terra lago."[1]

The Valais plan, however, is only the beginning of a bigger one for making people old-fashioned. The more I see of your new fashions the less I like them. I, a second time (lest the first impression should have been too weak), was fated to come from Venice to Verona with an American family, father and mother and two girls — presumably rich — girls 15 and 18. I never before conceived the misery of wretches who had spent all their lives in trying to gratify themselves. It was a little warm — warmer than was entirely luxuri-

[1] "Delle mie vene farsi in terra lago." *Purgatorio*, v. 84.

ous — but nothing in the least harmful. They moaned and fidgeted and frowned and puffed and stretched and fanned, and ate lemons, and smelt bottles, and covered their faces, and tore the cover off again, and had no one thought or feeling, during five hours of travelling in the most noble part of all the world, except what four poor beasts would have had in their den in a menagerie, being dragged about on a hot day. Add to this misery every form of possible vulgarity, in methods of doing and saying the common things they said and did. I never yet saw humanity so degraded (*allowing for external circumstances of every possible advantage*). Given wealth, attainable education, and the inheritance of eighteen centuries of Christianity and ten of noble Paganism; and this is your result — by means of "Liberty."

I am oppressed with work that I *can't* do, but must soon close now. Send me a line to Lugano. Love to you all.

Ever your affectionate

J. R.

LUGANO, 14th *August*, '69.
½ past seven, morning.

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — I am sitting in a splendid saloon with a French Turqu-oise carpet and a French clock, and two bad pictures, one in the French, one in the Italian style, and some French china, and velvet chairs, and a balcony composed of blocks of granite, 7 inches thick by 9 over, carried jauntily on rods of beautifully designed cast iron — thus.[1] But *I* can't give you the lovely Blondin-like effect of the granite balanced on the edge of the iron fence at *a* (and I 've rounded it, to the great injustice of the trim cutting). I *leave* Italy here, but at Baveno, where I entered Italy, I had a balustrade similarly constructed, composed, however, of *half* balusters of cast iron, hollow and painted to imitate the granite.[1] Outside, I have a garden, with a Chinese pagoda in it painted vermilion, and a fountain.

I have been vainly ringing for my break-

[1] Here was a rough sketch.

fast, and have had to order it successively of two waiters, the first not being orthodox — I mean not the right Lord in waiting. The magnificent pile which I thus triumphantly inhabit, with granite pillars outside, and Caryatides of rough marble in the great arm and leg and eyebrow style, is built, or, rather, jammed straight up against the wall of Sta. Maria degli Angeli, where Luini's crucifixion is — thus.[1] Observe, in passing, that the crucifixion fails in colour, all its blues having changed; nor was it ever high in that quality, Luini having in it too many instruments to manage (great musician as he was) to come well out of it. Nobody but Veronese or Tintoret could have tackled a wall of this bigness, and *they* only by losing expression of face, which Luini wont.

Also, observe — Luini can't do *violent* passion. As deep as you like, but not stormy; so he is put out by his business here, and not

[1] Here another rough sketch.

quite up to himself, because he is trying to be more than himself.

But with all these drawbacks, and failing most where it tries most, it is as far as I know the greatest rendering of the Catholic conception of the Passion existing in the world; nor is there any other single picture in Italy deserving to rank with it, except Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment;" no other contends with it, even, in qualities of drawing and expression — and for my own part, I would give the whole Sistine chapel for the small upper corner of this, with the infidelity of St. Thomas and the Ascension.

Well, I walked in there, just out of the "Salon de Lecture" of my divinely blessed and appointed Inn — and out of it I walked down to the lake shore, which was covered with filthy town refuse — rags — dust — putrid meat — and the rest of it, except at one place where they were carting lime from a newly built villa into it; so I came back to my breakfast almost blind with rage, and sat

down between the first and second Lord in waiting's arrivals to write to *you*, who, on the whole, are the real Doer and Primal cause of whatever is done in Modern days. For all this essentially comes from America, and America only exists, as other things only exist, by what little good there is in them and it — so that you, being the foundation of America, are the Real Doer of all this, when one sees far enough.

Well, I had meant to write to you before about the granite business, for at Como yesterday I found the old houses in its principal street pulled down and replaced by big ones over shops, behind a vast colonnade of granite pillars, with *Roman* Doric capitals (the ugliest, you know, in all classicism), and this base,[1] (neither more nor less) — each pillar about 18 feet high by 6½ round! of solid granite.

Now, my dear Charles, it is entirely proper for you in America to know your political economy rightly. Also, while I play and

[1] Here another sketch.

have pleasure in your play, about this bar between us respecting Mill, remember, it *is* a bar — and a very stern one, however covered with creeping jessamine. Also, you cannot study any history rightly, ecclesiastical or otherwise, until you have so far made up your mind on certain points of political economy, as to know in what directions certain methods of expenditure act for good and evil.

Here is a very simple problem for you. Think out the exact operation of the money from first to last, spent on those granite columns, as affecting the future wealth of Italy. And write to me your result. I 'll tell you where, to-morrow — I 'm not quite sure to-day, till I get my letters, and I must send this first.

Love to you all. Your affectionate

J. Ruskin.

Faido, 15th *Aug.*, '69.

My dearest Charles, — I got letters at Lugano yesterday which, as I feared, may necessitate my running home soon. . . . I know

you will be sorry I cannot come to Vevay — but remember, I am in too steady pain to be able to enjoy *anything* — my *work* is an opiate — but is most so when quietest; few things are worse for me than the sight of domestic happiness — and since I have come to Italy, I have seen horror of which I had no conception before, in social destruction of law, which makes me at present quite speechless. You might as well expect a starved hyena to enjoy himself with you, as me, just now. I am going to see a poor sick girl at the Giesbach, the only Swiss girl I ever knew with the least understanding of her own country, and the only one I have known *lately* with any grace and courtesy of the old Swiss school left — but, of course, she 's dying.

Meantime, look here: No one can do me any good by loving me; I have more love, a thousand-fold, than I need, or can do any good with; but people do me good by making *me* love *them* — which is n't easy. Now, I can't love you rightly as long as you tacitly

hold me for so far fool as to spend my best strength in writing about what I don't understand. The best thing you can do for me is to ascertain and master the true points of difference between me and the political economists. If I am wrong, show me where — it is high time. If *they* are wrong, consider what that wrong extends into; and what your duty is, between them and me.

Ever your affectionate friend,

J. Ruskin.

Write to Hotel Giesbach, Lac de Brientz. I write this two miles below Turner's [1] [pass at Faido]. Now, Turner chose the Ticino as his exponent of Alpine torrent rage from the first day he saw it, and, eighteen years after his death, I find its devastation so awful that alone of all Alpine streams it gives me the idea of being unconquerable.

The letters which Ruskin received at Lugano, and which made his return home necessary, announced to him his election to the

[1] Here a rough sketch.

lately founded Slade professorship of Fine Art at Oxford. The recognition of his exceptional fitness for the position was naturally gratifying to him, and the opportunity afforded by it of influencing the youth at the University was one he was glad to possess. But the honor came to him at a time when he cared little for it. It could not calm his fevered spirit, nor soothe his wounded heart. He did not mention his election in his letters to me. He returned home at the end of August to add to his other work that of the preparation of the lectures to be given at the University in the next winter and spring.

BECKENRIED, LAKE LUCERNE, 16th *Aug.*, 1869.

I should have written long ago, if I had had pleasant things to write, but my life is much more like a strange dream of things that I once cared for, than a reality.

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — I can't go on with this begun letter [to another correspondent] — one of my long ago foretellings has come true at last. They are making a railroad up

the Rigi! I never cared for the Rigi, but fancy Wordsworth, after writing his poem "Our Lady of the Snow," hearing of it. And think of all that it means. I came on the steamer to-day in a crowd of animals smoking and spitting (English and German — not American) over the decks till they were slippery. Upon my word, I have n't been afraid of going mad, all through my sorrow, but if I stay much in Switzerland now I think my scorn would unsettle my brain, for all worst madness, nearly, begins in pride, from Nebuchadnezzar downwards. Heaven keep me from going mad *his* way, here, for instead of my body being wet with the dew of Heaven, it would be with tobacco spittle. All Mill and you, when one looks into it. Ever your loving

J. R.

GIESBACH, 18th *Aug.* [1869.]

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — You need not doubt the reality of my wish to see you here,

because I cannot come to Vevay to take my pleasure. I can take pleasure now no more in anything that used to make me happy, but I can be soothed and helped by my friend, if he is well enough to come; but do not, for *any* motive, cause me the pain of knowing that you are running any risk to come to me. If you can *safely* come, it will be good for me to see you. If *unsafely*, you could not do anything *less* good for me.

Above all, do not come in the thought that I feel otherwise to you in your absence, or in your letters, than I do in your presence. All that in your present letter you say "you thought I knew" I did and do know. And what I write to you is not with reference to any of your late letters. It is in consequence of the entirely quiet time I have had to think over all you have said to me, from Abbeville to now; over all you have told me of America; over the lives of the young Harvard soldiers; over Longfellow's, Lowell's, Emerson's work, as I read it now by the light of

the dying embers of Italy. And what I have just written to you on the economy question is in consequence of precisely the views which your present letter again states: — that you still confuse my morality with my economy, that you do not yet clearly see that I do not (in my books) dispute Mill's morality; but I flatly deny his *Economical science*, his, and all others of the school; I say they have neither taught, nor can teach men *how to make money* — that they don't even know so much as what money is — or what makes it become so — that they are *not* wise men — nor scientific men (nor — I say *here good* men); that they have an accursed semblance of being all these, which has deceived you and thousands more of *really* good and wise men; and that it is your duty to ascertain whether their science *is*, in its own limits, false or true, and to understand thoroughly what they are, and what *it* is.

But if you come here, I shall not talk of these things. What I want most to say, I

always write. I am never sure, in talk, of saying just what I mean. If you come, you shall see my drawings at Verona; hear, and help me in my plan for the Valais; rest among some of the purest Swiss scenery yet left in spoiled Switzerland; and give one gleam of light more to the close of the life of a Swiss girl, who, I think, in serene, sweet, instinctive, penetrative power, surpasses one's best ideal of youth in women. I shall be free till Thursday week; but if you come, give me a day's warning that I may have a nice room ready for you.

Ever your loving

J. Ruskin.

Thursday morning. Alas, only till this day week, and the weather seems wholly broken. . . . When you get this letter, and determine what to do, just telegraph to me, if you come, on what day — and then I will get a room for you at Thun, and you will have a quiet morning at lovely Thun, and I 'll meet you at the end of the lake of Thun (it was

Turner's favorite quay in all Switzerland, from first to last) nearest here, and save you all trouble and noise when you quit the steamer. I will write you again to-morrow with details of steamer time, etc.

Now, one word more about polit. econ., because I 'm not going to talk of that. *Don't tell me* any more about good and wise people "giving their lives" to the subject, and "differing from me." They *don't differ* (look in dictionary for *Differo*) from me. They are absolutely contrary to and in *Collision* with me; they don't know the *alphabet* even of the science they profess; they don't know the meaning of one word they use; not of Economy, for they don't know the meaning of *Nomy* nor of law, nor of the verb *νέμω*; not of a House, for they have no idea of Family; not of politics, for they don't know the meaning of a city; not of money, for they don't know the meaning either of *nummus* or *pecus;* and if you were to ask Mill at this moment, he could n't tell you the historical facts connected with the

use of alloy in precious metals — he could tell you a few banker's facts, and no more.

They don't know even the meaning of the word "useful" — they don't know the meaning of the word "to use," nor of *utor*, nor *abutor*, nor *fruor*, nor *fungor*, nor *potior*, nor *vescor*, the miserable wretches have n't brains enough to be prologue to an egg and butter, and you talk of their giving their lives! They have n't lives to give; they are not alive — they are a strange spawn begotten of misused money, senseless conductors of the curse of it, flesh-flies with false tongues in the proboscis of them. Differ from *me*, indeed. Heaven help me! I am bad enough and low enough in a thousand ways, but you must know the "difference" between them and me, a little better, one day. And that 's "just what I mean."

Here 's a pig rhyme, to finish with, I made to amuse Joan the day before yesterday. There were two little brown pigs on the pier at Beckenried — I never in my life saw such

splendid obstinacy, nor so much trouble given in so little time by two little beasts; it was lovely; and, you know, I 've written a whole "In memoriam" of Pig verses to Joan, so this is only one of the tender series.

Dear little pigs — on Beck'ried pier,
Whose minds, in this respect are clear,
That pulled in front, or pushed in rear,
Or twirled or tweaked by tail and ear,
You *wont* go there, and *will* come here,
Provided once you plainly see
That here we want you — *not* to be;[1] —
Dear little pigs! If only we
Could learn a little of your he-
Roism, and with defiant squeaks
Take Fortune's twitches and her tweaks,
As ancient Greeks met ancient Greeks,
Or clansmen, bred on Scottish peaks
To more of bravery than breeks,
Will quarrel for their tartan streaks,
Or Welshmen in the praise of leeks,

[1] Mind you read with the Hamlet phrase. I have n't left room enough to mark the pause after "you."

Or virtuosi for antiques,
Or ladies for their castes and cliques,
Or churches for their days and weeks,
Or pirates for convenient creeks,
Or anything with claws or beaks
For the poor ravine that it seeks. —
Dear little pigs, — if Lord and Knight
Would do but half the honest fight
In dragging people to do right
You 've done to-day to drag them wrong,
We 'd have the crooked straight, erelong.

Ever your loving

J. Ruskin.

Giesbach, 18th *August.*

My dearest Charles, — I have your letter from Lugano. . . .

I must get that book on Italian irrigation.[1] Strangely enough, I have just finished and

[1] The book, on Italian Irrigation by Captain (afterwards Colonel) R. Baird Smith. The great system of irrigation by means of canals which has been carried out by the government of India during the last fifty years was begun with the construction of the Ganges Canal, and Captain Baird Smith, one of the ablest officers of the corps of Bengal

folded a letter to the banker Carlo Blumenthal at Venice, with some notes on a pamphlet he lent me by the engineer who has the management of the lagoons. My letter was to show that the Lagoon question was finally insoluble, except as one of many connected with the water-system of Lombardy; and that the elevation of the bed of the Po was the first evil they had to deal with — being merely the *exponent* of the quantity of waste water which they allowed to drain from the Alps, charged with soil it had no business to bring down, when every drop of it was absolutely a spangle of gold let fall from Heaven; if they would only take the infinitesimally small trouble of catching said drop *where it fell* (and keeping it till they wanted it) instead of letting it drown the valleys of

Engineers, had been sent to study the system and methods of canalization and the distribution of water in upper Italy. His admirable report is a book of permanent value, and it has interest, not only for the student in its special subject, but also for the student of Italian economical history, and especially of the engineering work and practical inventions of Leonardo da Vinci.

the Ticino and Adige first, and then flood (eventually) Lombardy — in the meantime running waste into the lagoons and bordering all the plain with fever-marsh. I shall hold on quietly, enforcing this on every one who will listen, getting especially at such Alpine club men as have sense or heart, and so gradually work on, with this very simple principle of Utopian perfection, "Every field its pond — every ravine its reservoir" (and that on both sides of the Alps), or reservoirs, if necessary, all down, off the bed; but proper *upper* pools would generally be all that was wanted on the main tributaries of each torrent, just where they came together off the rounded ground. Then, beautifully planned drainage to throw the weight of water to the hardest part of the hill, where it could be dealt with sternly, and to relieve shingle and slate, as far as possible, from attrition. And so on. . . .

Ever, my dear Charles, your affectionate

J. R.

DIJON, 30th *August*, 1869.

I do not know what it was in my last letter[1] that gave you the impression of arrogance. I never wrote with less pride in my heart. Was it my comparing myself to the Antiquary and you to Lovel? Is not Lovel, throughout, the more sensible of the two?[2]

It was very natural that you should think me ungrateful in the matter of the Will. But remember, in all that you did for me in that, you were really working for the feelings of others after I am dead — not for me. I do not care two straws what people think of me after I am dead. . . .

But I do care, and very much, for what is said of me while I live. It makes an *immense* difference to me *now*, whether Joan and Dora find a flattering review of me in the morning papers, or one which stings and torments them, and me through them. And the only vexation of my life which you have it really

[1] That of August 18th. [2] See letter of 21st June.

in your power to allay is the continual provocation I receive from the universal assumption that I know nothing of political economy, and am a fool — so far — for talking of it. . . .

Now, I *am* going to write arrogantly — if you like — but it is right that you should know what I think, be it arrogant or not. . . . I came yesterday on a sentence of Ste.-Beuve's, which put me upon writing this letter (it is he who is your favorite critic, is it not?) "Phidias et Raphael faisaient admirablement les divinités, et n'y croyaient plus."

Now, this is a sentence of a quite incurably and irrevocably *shallow* person — of one who knows everything — who is exquisitely keen and right within his limits, sure to be fatally wrong beyond them. And I think your work and life force you to read too much of, and companion too much with, this kind of polished contemplation of superficies, so that I find I have influence over you, and hurt you by external ruggednesses, of some

of which I was wholly unconscious, and did not fancy that those I was conscious of would be felt by you.

But, whether this be so or not, there is really no question but that a man such as you should once for all master the *real* principles of political economy; know what its *laws* are—for it *has* its laws as inevitable all as gravitation; know what national poverty really means, and what it is caused by, and how far the teachings of present professors are eternally false or true. And then I want you to say publicly, in "Atlantic Monthly," — or elsewhere, — what you then will think respecting my political economy, and Mill's.

And what I meant by saying that I could not love you rightly till you did this, was simply that until you did it, you were to me what many of my other friends and lovers have been, — a seeker of my good in your own way, not in mine. If I had asked my father to give me forty thousand pounds to spend in giving dinners in London, I could

have had it at once, but he would not give me ten thousand to buy all the existing water-colours of Turner with, and thought me a fool for wanting to buy them. I did not understand his love for me, but I could not love him as much as if he had done what I wanted.

So, I know perfectly well that you would work for five years, to write a nice life of me; but I don't care about having my life written, and I know that no one *can* write a nice life of me, for my life has not been nice, and can never be satisfactory.

But if you work for one year at what will really be useful to you yourself (though I admit some discourtesy in my so much leaning on *this* — yet I should not urge you to help me if it would be all lost time to you), you can ascertain whether I am right or wrong in one of the main works of my life, and authoritatively assist or check me.

Before you see the crucifixion at Lugano,

you must study Luini carefully at Milan, giving several days to him. If you saw the crucifixion first, its faults would be too painful to you — deficiencies, I mean, for Luini has no "faults," at least, no sins, for "fault" *is* deficiency — and I will ask Count Borromeo to show you *his*.

Ever, with faithful love to you all,

Your affectionate

J. RUSKIN.

PARIS, 31st *August*.

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — It was a happy, or wise, thought to write to me here. I got your letter after a somewhat weary day — to give more zest to a pleasant arrival in the luxuriously minute, luxuriously quiet cell of Meurice's.

I walked, after dining, up the Rue de la Paix, and to Rue Tronchet, and got a prettily, and I hope strongly, bound copy of the "Cent Ballades." I have always "meant to" conquer that old French, and shall work at it all the

way home to-day. Already I have got much out of the songs. What a lovely one — that "nul n'y peut nuire, si non Dieu"!

The printing is beautiful, but wanting in legibility to aged eyes. I am going to do all I can to get a fine, quiet, and graceful type introduced. But there is no such thing as Cheapness in the universe. Everything costs its own Cost, and one of our best virtues is a just desire to pay it. Cheapness, in the modern notion of it, is least of all to be sought in books. The price of a month's eating is enough to supply any of us with all the books we need — the price of a month's pleasure of any other kind, with all the books we could delight in, provided the books needful and delightful were in print, which they are not, always; and well bound books, well treated, will last for three generations. Had I a son, he would now be reading, under orders of trust, my father's first edition of the Waverley novels, from which not a leaf is shed — on which not a stain has fallen. . . .

I will send you the "Queen of the Air" and — which is all I want you to read carefully — the four papers on Economy I wrote for Froude.

Even the few people who read them at the time did not see their meaning, because they thought the leaning on verbal derivation frivolous. But the first point in definition is to fix one's idea clearly; the second to fix the word for it which the best authors use, that we may be able to read *them* without mistake. If the reader knows the essential difference between "cost" and "price," it does not matter at present which *he* calls which; but it matters much that he should understand the relation of the words *Consto*, and *Pretium*, in Horace; and the relation between "For it *Cost* more to redeem his brother," and "A goodly *price* that I was prized at of them" in the Bible.

Ever your affectionate

J. R.

[DENMARK HILL] Sunday, 12th *September*, 1869.

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — It seems that last session in Parliament, Mr. Bright declared — and the saying was not in any grave manner questioned — that "in a common sense commercial community the adulteration of food was to be looked upon only as a form of competition."

The words are from the "Pall Mall Gazette," presumably approximating to the true ones.

Now, my dear Charles, when I accused *you* of being a supporter of American ill-manners, I was wholly in play — (my bad habit of mingling play with earnest has of late led you into some mistakes about my letters which have caused you pain).

But when I accuse Mill of being the root of nearly all immediate evil among us in England, I am in earnest — the man being looked up to as "the greatest thinker" when he is in truth an utterly shallow and wretched segment of a human creature, incapable of

understanding *Anything* in the ultimate conditions of it, and countenancing with an unhappy fortune, whatever is fatallest in the popular error of English mind.

I want you to look a little at the really great statements of Economical principle made by the true Men of all time; and you will gradually feel what deadly cast skin of the carcasses of every error they abhorred, modern "Economists" have patched up their hide with.

Here is the last sentence of Linnæus's preface to the "Systema Naturæ:" —

"Omnes res creatae sunt divinae sapientiae et potentiae testes, *divitiae* felicitatis humanae; ex harum usu bonitas Creatoris; ex pulchritudine sapientia Domini; ex oeconomia in Conservatione, Proportione, Renovatione, potentia Majestatis elucet. Earum itaque indagatio . . . a vere eruditis et sapientibus semper exculta; male[1] doctis et barbaris, semper inimica fuit."

[1] The original reads "perverse," as I find in Ruskin's own copy, once that of the poet Gray, and full of notes and drawings by him.

The use of the word "Economy" in this sentence and in the one just preceding,—"Naturalis quum scientia trium regnorum, fundamentum sit, omnis Diaetae, Medicinae, *Oeconomiae, tam privatae*, quam ipsius naturae,"—is, of course, the eternally right and sound one; the vulgar abuse of the term itself is one of the first causes of blunder in the modern systems—the great part of which consist only in the explanation of the methods by which one pedlar, under favourable circumstances, may get an advantage over another.

Ever your affectionate J. R.

DENMARK HILL, 21st *September*, 1869.

MY DEAREST CHARLES,—. . . Yes, that Republican voice of thunder is very terrible. Does it never make you feel how much of what will most destroy true Liberty (ἐλευθερία) has arisen from those who were the first guides of the new passion having invoked "Liberty" instead of "Justice?"

Do not, in reading anything of mine on

"Economy," confuse what I add about *Government* with the science itself. It is a point of Economical Science that a house must be kept in order. But whether it can be kept in order best by a Master, or by the discussions and votes of the operative helps, may be questionable. Doubt my conclusions as much as you will, but distinguish them always from the facts which are the base of them. I claim to have established the principles of the Science, not their final results.

And, again, do not confuse my Spiritual Platonism with my Economical abstractions. It is not Platonism, but a mathematical axiom, that a Line is length without breadth. Nor is it Platonism, but an economical axiom, that wealth means that which conduces to life.

So far from studying things that Are not, one of the chief purposes of "Munera Pulveris" is to show that wealth as at present gathered is an εἴδωλον — Phantasm; and to prove what substance is, and is not, in it.

I have £50,000.

What does £ mean?

I have *not* 50,000 sovereigns.

Nor could I have them, if everybody else who suppose themselves to have money asked for theirs at the same time. What I really have is fifty thousand possibilities of — a quite uncertain amount of possession, which depends wholly on other people's fancy and *poverty*. For, if *everybody* had fifty thousand pounds, everybody would be as helpless as if he had nothing.

Also, remember this great distinction, — All common political economy is bound on the axiom, "Man is a beast of prey." (It was so stated in those words by Mr. Mill at a social science meeting.) My political economy is based on the axiom, "Man is an animal whose physical power depends on its social faiths and affections."

Which of these principles do you reckon as a theory, and which as a Fact?

Ever your "affectionate" (theoretically and platonically) J. Ruskin.

LONDON, 16th *October*, 1869.

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — I cannot tell you how opportune and in all likelihood how useful your Geneva letter was and will be, unless I first told you of many plans and difficulties — which I cannot, for I want to answer your more important first letter.

In putting the two questions "respecting the being of a God" and "respecting Immortality" together, you render it almost impossible for me to speak but prefatorily and not to the point of your letter.

That I am no more immortal than a gnat, or a bell of heath, all nature, as far as I can read it, teaches me, and on that conviction I have henceforward to live my gnat's or heath's life.

But that a power shaped both the heath bell and me, of which I know and can know nothing, but of which every day I am the passive instrument, and, in a permitted measure, also, the Wilful Helper or Resister — this,

as distinctly, all nature teaches me, and it is, in my present notions of things, a vital truth.

That there are good men, who can for some time live without perceiving it, does not make me think it less vital, than that, under certain excitements and conditions, you could live for a certain number of days without food, would make you think food not vital. (Did ever a civilized being's sentence get into such a mess before?)

If you had to teach your children that there was no evidence of any spiritual world or power, I think they would become separate from their fellows in humanity, incapable of right sympathy, — in many ways themselves degraded and unhappy.

But to teach them that they must live, and *Die* — totally — in obedience to a Spiritual Power, above them *infinitely*, — how much more than they are above the creatures whose lives are subject to them. If you can teach them this, I think you show them the law of

noblest heroism, and of happiest and highest intellectual state.

But, if you cannot do this, I know that you can, and will, teach them a life of love and honour. This is wholly independent of right opinion on any questionable point of belief, and it seems to me so entirely a matter of mere example and training, in certain modes of thought and life, that I cannot understand your feeling any fear about it. I am not the least afraid of Sally's beginning to tease her pet bird or kitten, because you and Mr. Darwin choose to teach her that their tails grew by accident, or that feathers were once fur; while, on the contrary, I should be much afraid that both you and I might be teased, very literally, to Death, with fire or brimstone, by some very pious persons, if they could read both our letters and were allowed then to do what they liked with us.

(I wish the Spirit *would* help me to write straight. You would believe in it after such a miracle.) And, lastly, it seems to me that

a father ought to tell his children, as their teacher, only what he knows to be true; and as their friend, he may tell them, without his paternal sanction and authority, many other things which he hopes, or believes, or disbelieves; but in all this, he need fear no responsibility beyond that of governing his own heart. It is the law of nature that the Father should teach the children, openly, fully, fearlessly, what is in his heart. Heaven must be answerable for the end — not you.

I am alone, and often weary, but doing good work. But I can't write more than is necessary, having no heart for anything, — or else there 's so much it ought to be the best Rest to write to you; but I am ever with love to you all, your faithful

J. Ruskin.

Denmark Hill, 17th *November*, 1869.

My dearest Charles, — . . . This is what I am doing: —

1. I write every day, if possible, a little of

my botany; — as much of it as is done by my birthday, I shall then collect and print, promising, if I keep well, to go on next year. It is to be called *Cora Nivalis*, "Snowy Proserpine." An introduction for young people to the study of Alpine and Arctic wild flowers.

2. I am translating or transferring "Chaucer's Dream" into intelligible and simple English, and am going to print it with the original, and a note on every difficult or pretty word, for the first of my series of standard literature for young people. I hope to get *it* out also about my birthday.

3. I am translating the "Cent Ballades" into the same kind of English (our own present simplest), and am going very soon to write to the publishers for leave to edit that for the second of my standard books. I have worked through 57 of the 100, but am much puzzled yet here and there.

4. I am correcting "Sesame and Lilies" for a new edition, adding the Dublin lecture, and a final, practical, piece of very plain direc-

tions to those young ladies who will mind what I say. Q. How many?

5. I am preparing a series of drawings of natural history, and from the old masters, for use in the schools of Oxford. I have done a prawn's rostrum and the ivy on a wall of Mantegna's.

6. I am writing this following series of lectures for Oxford in the spring: —

1. The meaning of University Education; and the proper harmony of its Elements.
2. The relation of Art to Letters.
3. The relation of Art to Science.
4. The relation of Art to Religion.
5. The relation of Art to Morality.
6. The relation of Art to Economy.
7. Practical conclusions.

7. I am writing two papers on agates, and superintending the plates for the geological Magazine in December and January.

8. I have been giving —— lessons in

French and drawing, and am giving —— lessons in Italian and directing her as a vowed sister of our society — with one or two more.

9. I am learning how to play musical scales quite rightly, and have a real Music-master twice a week, and practice always half an hour a day.

10. I am reading Marmontel's Memoirs to my mother. . . .

Now, I hope you 'll get this letter, for you see I have n't much time left for letters. Love to you all.

Ever your faithful

J. Ruskin.

1 *January*, 1870.

. . . I have been thrown a little out of calculation by finding that Professorship-years are from summer to summer, not winter to winter, so I have to give twelve lectures this spring, the third of the entire necessary course. I have been forced, therefore, to throw up the botany for this winter, and I take up Oxford

with what strength I have. The twelve lectures are to be (I think I shall not now change): —

1. Introduction.
2. Relation of Art to Religion.
3. Relation of Art to Morality.
4. Relation of Art to (material) use. (Household Furniture, Arms, Dress, Lodging, Medium of exchange.)
5. Line.
6. Light and shade.
7. Colour.
8. Schools of Sculpture, Clay (including glass), Wood, Metal, Stone.
9. Schools of Architecture — Clay, Wood, Stone, Glass, in windows.
10. Schools of painting (Material indifferent) considered with reference to immediate study and practice.

A. of Natural History.

11. B. of Landscape.
12. C. of the Human figure.

I 've no more time to-day. Ever your affectionate J. Ruskin.

26 *March*, 1870.

. . . I should only have made you anxious if I had written. Just as I had set myself to my Oxford work (I began on the New Year's day properly), on the 7th of January I met with an experience which made me ill for a month, so that all I wrote was bad; and in the first days of February I had to re-write almost the whole of the inaugural lecture to be given on the 8th, being thrown full a month behind with everything, and with all my brain and stomach wrong. . . .

My lectures have pleased the people well enough, but they 're all so far below what I thought to make them, and they were all done against time, — not half put in that I wanted to say, — and I caught a violent cold besides, and could not go out to take exercise, so that I was very near breaking down at one time; also, making the drawings for them [the students] to copy has taken me three times the trouble I expected.

But I think it will be well done at last. I

have started them on a totally new and defiantly difficult principle; drawing all with the brush, as on Greek vases, and I 'm choosing a whole series of the Greek gods, old and young, for them to draw every detail of with the brush, as the Greeks did; and if they don't understand something more about Apelles and Protogenes than English draughtsmen ever did yet, I shall resign my chair.

I 've had to give up everything else; botany, Chaucer, "Cent Ballades," friends, and Fortune, for she has set herself to thwart me and to torment me like a Fury. But I 've given the last lecture for this spring, and now I hope I shall never more be so far behindhand with my work. . . .

VENICE, 11th *June*, 1870.

MY DEAREST CHARLES, — Your letter reached me this afternoon, and I reply before 12 of the midnight. Stay — there *is* the earliest clock striking, — with full moon like morning. . . .

Day by day passes, and finds me more helpless; coming back here makes me unspeakably sad. I am doing, I hope, useful work — I can only breathe freely when I *am* at work. I send you a few proof sheets which may interest you and show you what I am trying to do.

12th *June*, morning.

My absurd fault is that I never take a minute or two of the pleasure of saying nothing worth, yet you would be glad of the worthlessness.

My hand shakes more than usual, but I am not worse than usual. I have been standing since 7 o'clock on a chair stretching up to see the lizard that carries the signature under the elbow of St. Jerome's dead body,[1] and drawing it for Oxford zoölogical class; it is as bad as drawing from life, the thing is so subtle; it is worse than motion.

Send me a line to the Due Torri, Verona. I shall have left Venice, and I am going into the Alps for a little rest. I don't know what

[1] Here a sketch of the lizard and Carpaccio's signature.

it will be to do, whether Alpine Roses, or if I shall come back here to work on Tintoret.

"There *is* none like him — *none*."[1]

Love to you all.

Ever your affectionate

J. RUSKIN.

[1] *Maud.*

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